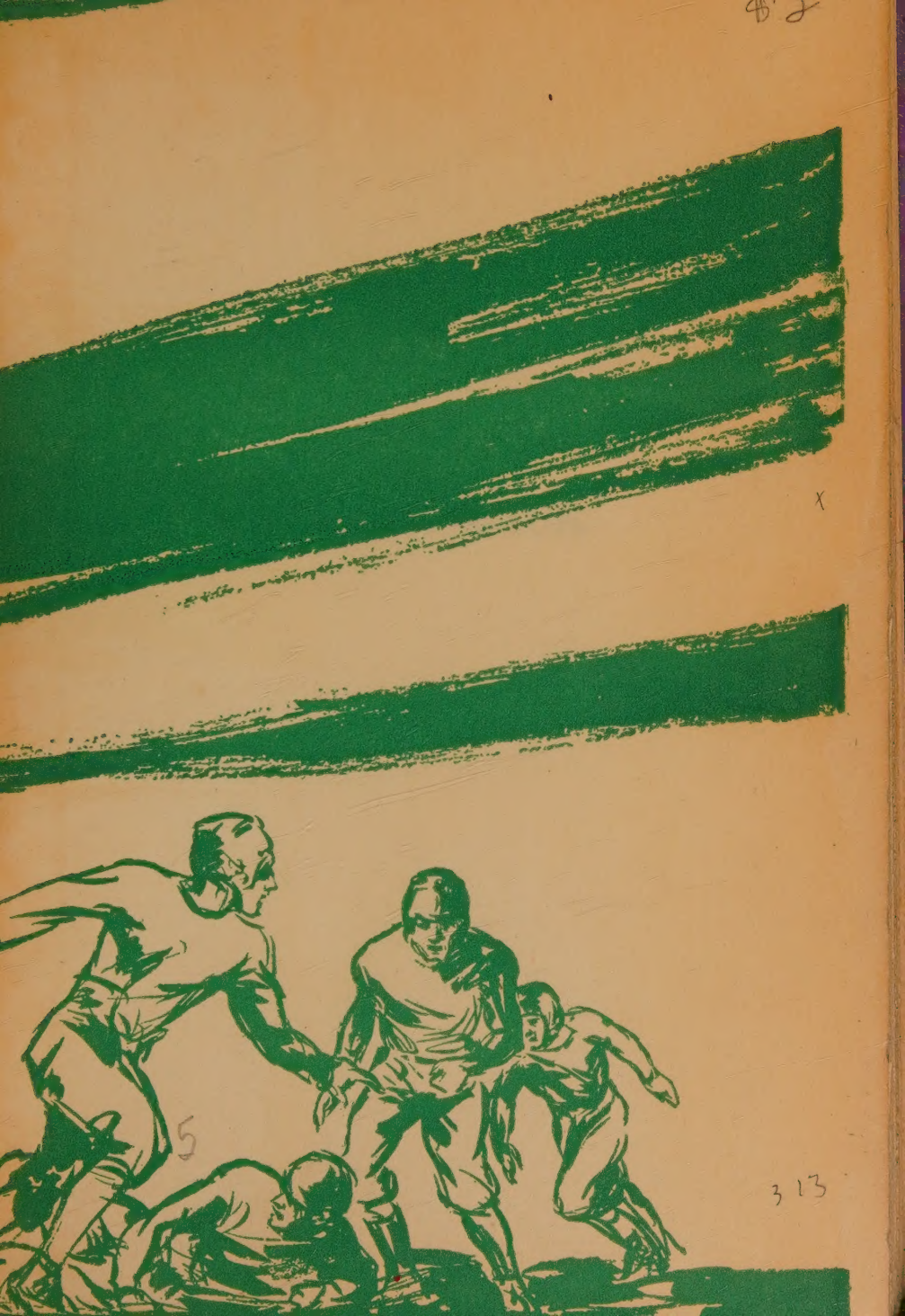
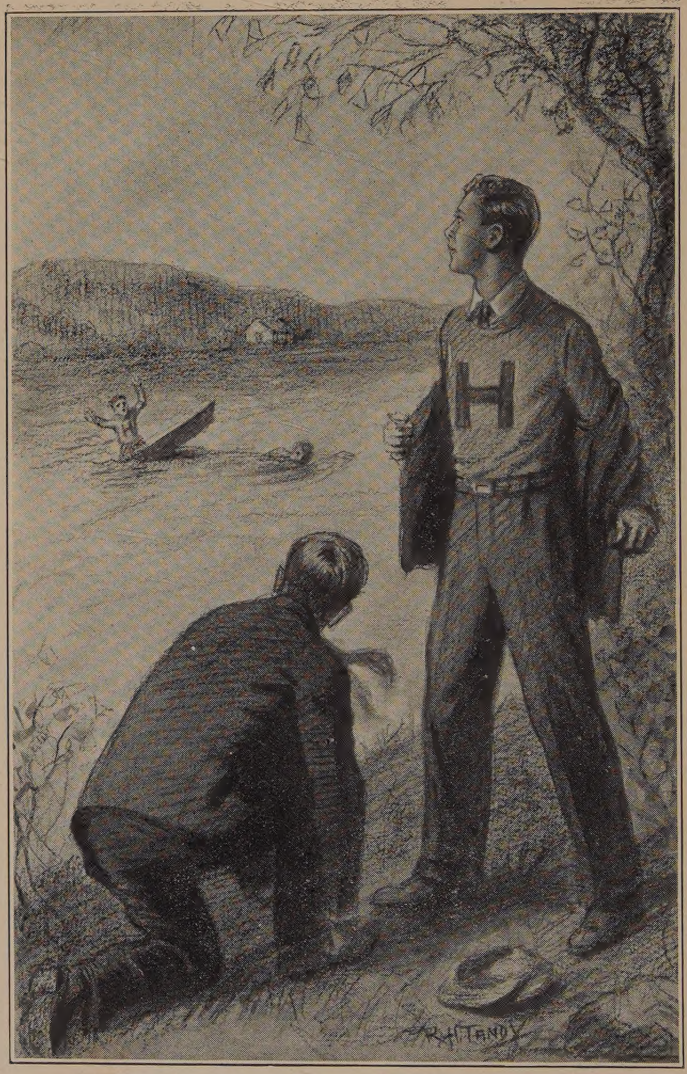


THE HALF-BACK



CLAUSEN WAS KNEELING IN THE SINKING BOAT AND CRYING TO THE OTHER LAD FOR HELP.

The Half-Back. *Frontispiece* (*Page* 113)

THE HALF-BACK

A Story of School, Football and Golf

by RALPH HENRY BARBOUR

Author of
"For the Honor of the School"

GROSSET & DUNLAP, *Publishers*
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RALPH HENRY BARBOUR
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TO

EVERY AMERICAN BOY

WHO LOVES HONEST, MANLY SPORT,

THIS STORY IS DEDICATED.

FOREWORD

Tempting boys to be what they should be—giving them in wholesome form what they want—that is the purpose and power of Scouting. To help parents and leaders of youth secure *books boys like best* that are also best for boys, the Boy Scouts of America organized EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY. The books included, formerly sold at prices ranging from $1.50 to $2.00 but, by special arangement with the several publishers interested, are now sold in the EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY Edition at $1.00 per volume.

The books of EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY were selected by the Library Commission of the Boy Scouts of America, consisting of George F. Bowerman, Librarian, Public Library of the District of Columbia; Harrison W. Craver, Director, Engineering Societies Library, New York City; Claude G. Leland, Superintendent, Bureau of Libraries, Board of Education, New York City; Edward F. Stevens, Librarian, Pratt Institute Free Library, Brooklyn, N. Y., and Franklin K. Mathiews, Chief Scout Li-

brarian. Only such books were chosen by the Commission as proved to be, by *a nation wide canvas,* most in demand by the boys themselves. Their popularity is further attested by the fact that in the EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY Edition, more than a million and a quarter copies of these books have already been sold.

We know so well, are reminded so often of the worth of the good book and great, that too often we fail to observe or understand the influence for good of a boy's recreational reading. Such books may influence him for good or ill as profoundly as his play activities, of which they are a vital part. The needful thing is to find stories in which the heroes have the characteristics boys so much admire—unquenchable courage, immense resourcefulness, absolute fidelity, conspicuous greatness. We believe the books of EVERY BOY'S LIBRARY measurably well meet this challenge.

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA,

James E. West

Chief Scout Executive.

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THE HALF-BACK.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY IN THE STRAW HAT.

"How's craps, Country?"

"Shut up, Bart! he may hear you."

"What if he does, ninny? I want him to. Say, Spinach!"

"Do you suppose he's going to try and play football, Bart?"

"Not he. He's looking for a rake. Thinks this is a hayfield, Wall."

The speakers were lying on the turf back of the north goal on the campus at Hillton Academy. The elder and larger of the two was a rather coarse-looking youth of seventeen. His name was Bartlett Cloud, shortened by his acquaintances to "Bart" for the sake of that brevity beloved of the schoolboy. His companion, Wallace Clausen, was a handsome though rather frail-looking boy, a year his junior. The two were roommates and friends.

"He'd better rake his hair," responded the latter youth jeeringly. "I'll bet there's lots of hayseed in it!"

The subject of their derisive remarks, although standing but a scant distance away, apparently heard none of them.

"Hi, West!" shouted Bartlett Cloud as a youth, attired in a finely fitting golf costume, and swinging a brassie, approached. The newcomer hesitated, then joined the two friends.

"Hello! you fellows. What's up? Thought it was golf, from the crowd over here." He stretched himself beside them on the grass.

"Golf!" answered Bartlett Cloud contemptuously. "I don't believe you ever think of anything except golf, Out! Do you ever wake up in the middle of the night trying to drive the pillow out of the window with a bed-slat?"

"Oh, sometimes," answered Outfield West smilingly. "There's a heap more sense in being daft over a decent game like golf than in going crazy about football. It's just a kid's game."

"Oh, is it?" growled Bartlett Cloud. "I'd just like to have you opposite me in a good stiff game for about five minutes. I'd show you something about the 'kid's game!'"

"Well, I don't say you couldn't knock me down a few times and walk over me, but who wants to play such games —except a lot of bullies like yourself?"

"Plenty of fellows, apparently," answered the third member of the group, Wallace Clausen, hastening to avert the threatening quarrel. "Just look around you. I've never

seen more fellows turn out at the beginning of the season than are here to-day. There must be sixty here."

"More like a hundred," grunted "Bart" Cloud, not yet won over to good temper. "Every little freshman thinks he can buy a pair of moleskins and be a football man. Look at that fellow over yonder, the one with the baggy trousers and straw hat. The idea of that fellow coming down here just out of the hayfield and having the cheek to report for football practice! What do you suppose he would do if some one threw a ball at him?"

"Catch it in his hat," suggested Wallace Clausen.

"He *does* look a bit—er—rural," said Outfield West, eying the youth in question. "I fear he doesn't know a bulger from a baffy," he added sorrowfully.

"What's more to the subject," said Wallace Clausen, "is that he probably doesn't know a touch-down from a referee. There's where the fun will come in."

"Well, I'm no judge of football, thank goodness!" answered West, "but from the length of that chap I'll bet he's a bully kicker."

"Nonsense. That's what a fellow always thinks who doesn't know anything about the game. It takes something more than long legs to make a good punter."

"Perhaps; but there's one thing sure, Bart: that hayseed will be a better player than you at the end of two months—that is, if he gets taken on."

"I'll bet you he won't be able to catch a punt," growled

Cloud. "A fool like him can no more learn football than —than——"

"Than you could learn golf," continued West sweetly.

"Oh, shut up! I know a mule that plays golf better than you do."

"Well, I sha'n't attempt to compete with your friends, Bart."

"There you both go, quarreling again," cried Clausen. "If you don't shut up, I'll have to whip the pair of you."

Wallace Clausen was about two thirds the size of Cloud, and lacked both the height and breadth of shoulder that made West's popular nickname of "Out" West seem so appropriate. Clausen's threat was so absurd that Cloud came back to good humor with a laugh, and even West grinned.

"Come on, Wall—there's Blair," said Cloud. "You'd better come too, Out, and learn something about a decent game." West shook his head, and the other two arose and hurried away to where the captain of the school eleven was standing beneath the west goal, surrounded by a crowd of variously attired football aspirants. West, left to himself, sighed lazily and fell to digging holes in the turf with his brassie. Tiring of this amusement in a trice, he arose and sauntered over to the side-line and watched the operations. Some sixty boys, varying in age from fifteen to nineteen, some clothed in full football rig, some wearing the ordinary dress in which they had stepped from the school rooms an hour before, all laughing or talking with the high

spirits produced upon healthy youth by the tonic breezes of late September, were standing about the gridiron. I have said that all were laughing or talking. This is not true; one among them was silent.

For standing near by was the youth who had aroused the merriment of Cloud and Clausen, and who West had shortly before dubbed "rural." And rural he looked. His gray and rather wrinkled trousers and his black coat and vest of cheap goods were in the cut of two seasons gone, and his discolored straw hat looked sadly out of place among so many warm caps. But as he watched the scene with intent and earnest face there was that about him that held West's attention. He looked to be about seventeen. His height was above the ordinary, and in the broad shoulders and hips lay promise of great strength and vigor.

But it was the face that attracted West most. So earnest, honest, and fearless was it that West unconsciously wished to know it better, and found himself drawing nearer to the straw hat and baggy gray trousers. But their owner appeared to be unconscious of his presence and West paused.

"I don't believe that chap knows golf from Puss-in-the-Corner," mused West, "but I'll bet a dozen Silvertowns that he could learn; and that's more than most chaps here can. I almost believe that I'd loan him my new dogwood driver!"

Wesley Blair, captain of the eleven, was bringing order out of chaos. Blair was one of the leaders in school life at Hillton, a strongly built, manly fellow, beloved of the higher

class boys, adored from a distance by the youngsters. Blair was serving his second term as football captain, having been elected to succeed himself the previous fall. At this moment, attired in the crimson sweater, moleskin trousers, and black and crimson stockings that made up the school uniform, he looked every inch the commander of the motley array that surrounded him.

"Warren, you take a dozen or so of these fellows over there out of the way and pass the ball awhile. Get their names first.—Christie, you take another dozen farther down the field."

The crowd began to melt away, squad after squad moving off down the field to take position and learn the rudiments of the game. Blair assembled the experienced players about him and, dividing them into two groups, put them to work at passing and falling. The youth with the straw hat still stood unnoticed on the side-line. When the last of the squads had moved away he stepped forward and addressed the captain:

"Where do you want me?"

Blair, suppressing a smile of amusement as he looked the applicant over, asked:

"Ever played any?"

"Some; I was right end on the Felton Grammar School team last year."

"Where's Felton Grammar School, please?"

"Maine, near Auburn."

"Oh! What's your name?"

"Joel March."

"Can you kick?"

"Pretty fair."

"Well, show me what you consider pretty fair." He turned to the nearest squad. "Toss me the ball a minute, Ned. Here's a chap who wants to try a kick."

Ned Post threw the ball, and his squad of veterans turned to observe the odd-looking country boy toe the pigskin. Several audible remarks were made, none of them at all flattering to the subject of them; but if the latter heard them he made no sign, but accepted the ball from Blair without fumbling it, much to the surprise of the onlookers. Among these were Clausen and Cloud, their mouths prepared for the burst of ironical laughter that was expected to follow the country boy's effort.

"Drop or punt?" asked the latter, as he settled the oval in a rather ample hand.

"Which can you kick best?" questioned Blair. The youth considered a moment.

"I guess I can punt best." He stepped back, balancing the ball in his right hand, took a long stride forward, swung his right leg in a wide arc, dropped the ball, and sent it sailing down the field toward the distant goal. A murmur of applause took the place of the derisive laugh, and Blair glanced curiously at the former right end-rush of the Felton Grammar School.

"Yes, that's pretty fair. Some day with hard practice you may make a kicker." Several of the older fellows smiled knowingly. It was Blair's way of nipping conceit in the bud. "What class are you in?"

"Upper middle," replied the youth under the straw hat, displaying no disappointment at the scant praise.

"Well, March, kindly go down the field to that last squad and tell Tom Warren that I sent you. And say," he continued, as the candidate started off, and he was struck anew with the oddity of the straw hat and wrinkled trousers, "you had better tell him that you are the man that punted that ball."

"That chap has got to learn golf," said Outfield West to himself as he turned away after witnessing the incident, "even if I have to hog-tie him and teach it to him. What did he say his name was? February? March? That was it. It's kind of a chilly name. I'll make it a point to scrape acquaintance with him. He's a born golfer. His calm indifference when Blair tried to 'take him down' was beautiful to see. He's the sort of fellow that would smile if he made a foozle in a medal play."

West drew a golf ball from his pocket and, throwing it on the turf, gave it a half-shot off toward the river, following leisurely after it and pondering on the possibility of making a crack golfer out of a country lad in a straw hat.

Over on the gridiron, meanwhile, the candidates for football honors were limbering up in a way that greatly sur-

prised not a few of the inexperienced. It is one thing to watch the game from the grand stand or side-lines and another to have an awkward, wobbly, elusive spheroid tossed to the ground a few feet from you and be required to straightway throw yourself upon it in such manner that when it stops rolling it will be snugly stowed between you and the ground. If the reader has played football he will know what this means. If he has not—well, there is no use trying to explain it to him. He must get a ball and try it for himself.

But even this exercise may lose its terrors after a while, and when at the end of an hour or more the lads were dismissed, there were many among them who limped back to their rooms sore and bruised, but proudly elated over their first day with the pigskin. Even to the youth in the straw hat it was tiresome work, although not new to him, and after practice was over, instead of joining in the little stream that eddied back to the academy grounds, he struck off to where a long straggling row of cedars and firs marked the course of the river. Once there he found himself standing on a bluff with the broad, placid stream stretching away to the north and south at his feet. The bank was some twenty feet high and covered sparsely with grass and weeds; and a few feet below him a granite bowlder stuck its lichened head outward from the cliff, forming an inviting seat from which to view the sunset across the lowland opposite. The boy half scrambled, half fell the short distance, and, settling

himself in comfort on the ledge, became at once absorbed in his thoughts.

Perhaps he was thinking a trifle sadly of the home which he had left back there among the Maine hills, and which must have seemed a very long way off; or perhaps he was dwelling in awe upon the erudition of that excellent Greek gentleman, Mr. Xenophon, whose acquaintance, by means of the Anabasis, he was just making; or perhaps he was thinking of no more serious a subject than football and the intricate art of punting. But, whatever his thoughts may have been, they were doomed to speedy interruption, as will be seen.

Outfield West left the campus behind and, with the little white ball soaring ahead, took his way leisurely to the woods that bordered the tiny lake. Here he spent a quarter of an hour amid the tall grass and bushes, fighting his way patiently out of awkward lies, and finally driving off by the river bank, where a stretch of close, hard sod offered excellent chances for long shots. Again and again the ball flew singing on its way, till at last the campus was at hand again, and Stony Bunker intervened between West and Home.

Stony Bunker lay close to the river bluff and was the terror of all Hillton golfers, for, while a too short stroke was likely to leave you in the sand pit, a too vigorous one was just as likely to land you in the river. West knew Stony Bunker well by reason of former meetings, and he knew equally well what amount of swing was necessary to land just over the hazard, but well short of the bluff.

Perhaps it was the brassie that was to blame—for a full-length, supple-shafted, wooden driver would have been what you or I would have chosen for that stroke—or perhaps West himself was to blame. That as it may be, the fact remains that that provoking ball flew clear over the bunker as though possessed of wings and disappeared over the bluff!

With an exclamation of disgust West hurried after, for when they cost thirty-five cents apiece golf balls are not willingly lost even by lads who, like Outfield West, possess allowances far in excess of their needs. But the first glance down the bank reassured him, for there was the runaway ball snugly ensconced on the tiny strip of sandy beach that intervened between the bank and the water. West grasped an overhanging fir branch and swung himself over the ledge.

Now, that particular branch was no longer youthful and strong, and consequently when it felt the full weight of West's one hundred and thirty-five pounds it simply broke in his hand, and the boy started down the steep slope with a rapidity that rather unnerved him and brought an involuntary cry of alarm to his lips. It was the cry that was the means of saving him from painful results, since at the bottom of the bank lay a bed of good-sized rocks that would have caused many an ugly bruise had he fallen among them.

But suddenly, as he went falling, slipping, clutching wildly at the elusive weeds, he was brought up with a sud-

denness that drove the breath from his body. Weak and panting, he struggled up to the top of the jutting ledge, assisted by two strong arms, and throwing himself upon it looked wonderingly around for his rescuer.

Above him towered the boy in the straw hat.

CHAPTER II.

STATION ROAD AND RIVER PATH.

Traveling north by rail up the Hudson Valley you will come, when some two hours from New York, to a little stone depot nestling at the shoulder of a high wooded hill. To reach it the train suddenly leaves the river a mile back, scurries across a level meadow, shrills a long blast on the whistle, and pauses for an instant at Hillton. If your seat chances to be on the left side of the car, and if you look quickly just as the whistle sounds, you will see in the foreground a broad field running away to the river, and in it an oval track, a gayly colored grand stand, and just beyond, at some distance from each other, what appear to the uninitiated to be two gallows. Farther on rises a gentle hill, crowned with massive elms, from among which tower the tops of a number of picturesque red-brick buildings.

Then the train hurries on again, under the shadow of Mount Adam, where in the deep maple woods the squirrels leap all day among the tree tops and where the sunlight strives year after year to find its way through the thick shade, and once more the river is beside you, the train is speeding

due north again, and you have, perhaps without knowing it, caught a glimpse of Hillton Academy.

From the little stone station a queer old coach rumbles away down a wide country road. It carries the mail and the village supplies and, less often, a traveler; and the driver, "Old Joe" Pike, has grown gray between the station and the Eagle Tavern. If, instead of going on to the north, you had descended from the train, and had mounted to the seat beside "Old Joe," you would have made the acquaintance of a very worthy member of Hillton society, and, besides, have received a deal of information as the two stout grays trotted along.

"Yes, that's the 'Cademy up there among them trees, That buildin' with the tower's the 'Cademy Buildin', and the squatty one that you can just see is one of the halls—Masters they call it, after the man that founded the school. The big, new buildin' is another of 'em, Warren; and Turner's beyond it; and if you look right sharp you can see Bradley Hall to the left there.

"Here's where we turn. Just keep your foot on that mail-bag, if you please, sir. There's the village, over yonder to the right. Kind of high up, ain't it? Ev'ry time any one builds he goes higher up the hill. That last house is old man Snyder's. Snyder says he can't help lookin' down on the rest of us. He, he!

"That road to the left we're comin' to 's Academy Road. This? Well, they used to call it Elm Street, but it's gen-

erally just 'the Station Road' nowadays. Now you can see the school pretty well, sir. That squatty place's the gymnasium; and them two littler houses of brick's the laboratories. Then the house with the wide piazza, that's Professor Wheeler's house; he's the Principal, you know. And the one next it, the yellow wooden house, I mean, that's what they call Hampton House. It's a dormatory, same as the others, but it's smaller and more select, as you might say.

"Hold tight, sir, around this corner. Most of them, the lads, sir, live in the village, however. You see, there ain't rooms enough in the 'Cademy grounds. I heard the other day that there's nigh on to two hundred and twenty boys in the school this year; I can remember when they was'nt but sixty, and it was the biggest boardin' school for boys in New York State. And that wa'n't many years ago, neither. The boys? Oh, they're a fine lot, sir; a bit mischievous at times, of course, but we're used to 'em in the village. And, bless you, sir, what can you expect from a boy anyhow? There ain't none of 'em perfect by a long shot; and I guess I ought to know—I've raised eight on 'em. There's the town hall and courthouse, and the Methodist church beyond. And here we are, sir, at the Eagle, and an hour before supper. Thank you, sir. Get ap!"

. . . . . .

Hillton Academy claims the distinction of being well over a century old. Founded in 1782 by one Peter Masters, LL. D., a very good and learned pedagogue, it has for more

than a hundred years maintained its high estate among boys' schools. The original charter provides "that there be, and hereby is, established . . . an Academy for promoting Piety and Virtue, and for the Education of Youth in the English, Latin, and Greek Languages, in Writing, Arithmetic, Music, and the Art of Speaking, Practical Geometry, Logic, and Geography, and such other of the Liberal Arts and Sciences or Languages as opportunity may hereafter permit, and as the Trustees, hereinafter provided, shall direct."

In the catalogue of Hillton Academy you may find a proud list of graduates that includes ministers plenipotentiary, members of cabinets, governors, senators, representatives, supreme court judges, college presidents, authors, and many, many other equally creditable to their alma mater. The founder and first principal of the academy passed away in 1835, as an old record says, "full of honor, and commanding the respect and love of all who knew him." He was succeeded by that best-beloved of American schoolmasters, Dr. Hosea Bradley, whose portrait, showing a tall, dignified, and hale old gentleman, with white hair, and dressed in ceremonious broadcloth, still hangs behind the chancel of the school chapel. Dr. Bradley resigned a few years before his death, in 1876, and the present principal, John Ross Wheeler, A. M., professor of Latin, took the chair.

As Professor Wheeler is a man of inordinate modesty, and as he is quite likely to read these words, I can say but little about him. Perhaps the statement of a member of

the upper middle class upon his return from a visit to the "office" will serve to throw some light on his character. Said the boy:

"I tell *you* I don't want to go through with that again! I'll take a licking first! He says things that count! You see, 'Wheels' has been a boy himself, and he hasn't forgotten it; and that—that makes a difference somehow!"

Yes, that disrespectful lad said "Wheels!" I have no excuse to offer for him; I only relate the incident as it occurred.

The buildings, many of them a hundred years old, are with one exception of warm-hued red brick. The gymnasium is built of red sandstone. Ivy has almost entirely hidden the walls of the academy building and of Masters Hall. The grounds are given over to well-kept sod, and the massive elms throw a tapestry of grateful shade in summer, and in winter hold the snow upon their great limbs and transform the Green into a fairyland of white. From the cluster of buildings the land slopes away southward, and along the river bluff a footpath winds past the Society House, past the boat-house steps, down to the campus. The path is bordered by firs, and here and there a stunted maple bends and nods to the passing skiffs.

Opposite the boat house, a modest bit of architecture, lies Long Isle, just where the river seemingly pauses for a deep breath after its bold sweep around the promontory crowned by the Academy Buildings. Here and there along the path

are little wooden benches to tempt the passer to rest and view from their hospitable seats the grand panorama of gently flowing river, of broad marsh and meadow beyond, of tiny villages dotting the distances, and of the purple wall of haze marking the line of the distant mountains.

Opposite Long Isle, a wonderful fairyland inaccessible to the scholars save on rare occasions, the river path meets the angle of the Station Road, where the coach makes its first turn. Then the path grows indistinct, merges into a broad ten-acre plot whereon are the track, gridiron, baseball ground, and the beginning of the golf links. This is the campus. And here is Stony Bunker, and beyond it is the bluff and the granite ledge; and lo! here we are back again at the point from which we started on our journey of discovery; back to Outfield West and to the boy in the ridiculous straw hat.

CHAPTER III.

OUTFIELD WEST.

It was several moments before West recovered his breath enough to speak, during which time he sat and gazed at his rescuer in amazement not unmixed with curiosity. And the rescuer looked down at West in simple amusement.

"Thanks," gasped West at length. "I suppose I'd have broke my silly neck if you hadn't given me a hand just when you did."

The other nodded. "You're welcome, of course; but I don't believe you'd have been very much hurt. What's that thing?" nodding toward the brassie, still tightly clutched in West's hand.

"A bras—a golf club. I was knocking a ball around a bit, and it went over the cliff here."

"I should think golf was a rather funny sort of a game."

"It isn't funny at all, if you know anything about it," replied West a trifle sharply. The rescuer was on dangerous ground, had he but known it.

"Isn't it? Well, I guess it is all in getting used to it. I don't believe I'd care much for tumbling over cliffs

that way; I should think it would use a fellow up after a while."

"Look here," exclaimed West, "you saved me an ugly fall, and I'm very much obliged, and all that; but—but you don't know the first thing about golf, and so you had better not talk about it." He made an effort to gain his feet, but sat down again with a groan.

"You sit still a while," said the boy in the straw hat, "and I'll drop down and get that ball for you." Suiting the action to the word, he lowered himself over the ledge, and slid down the bank to the beach. He dropped the golf ball in his pocket, after examining it with deep curiosity, and started back. But the return was less easy than the descent had been. The bank was gravelly, and his feet could gain no hold. Several times he struggled up a yard or so, only to slip back again to the bottom.

"I tell you what you do," called West, leaning over. "You get a bit of a run and get up as high as you can, and try and catch hold of this stick; then I'll pull you up."

The other obeyed, and succeeded in getting a firm hold of the brassie, but the rest was none so easy. West pulled and the other boy struggled, and then, at last, when both were out of breath, the straw hat rose above the ledge and its wearer scrambled up. Sitting down beside West he drew the ball from his pocket and handed it over.

"What do they make those of?" he asked.

"Gutta percha," answered West. "Then they're

molded and painted this way. You've never played golf, have you?"

"No, we don't know much about it down our way. I've played baseball and football some. Do you play football?"

"No, I should say not," answered West scornfully. "You see," more graciously, "golf takes up about all my time when I haven't got some lesson on; and this is the worst place for lessons you ever saw. A chap doesn't get time for anything else." The other boy looked puzzled.

"Well, don't you want to study?"

West stared in amazement. "Study! Want to? Of course I don't! Do you?"

"Very much. That's what I came to school for."

"Oh!" West studied the strange youth dubiously. Plainly, he was not at all the sort of boy one could teach golf to. "Then why were you trying for the football team awhile ago?"

"Because next to studying I want to play football more than anything else. Don't you think I'll have time for it?"

"You bet! And say, you ought to learn golf. It's the finest sport going." West's hopes revived. A fellow that wanted sport, if only football, could not be a bad sort. Besides, he would get over wanting to study; that, to West, was a most unnatural desire. "There isn't half a dozen really first-class players in school. You get some clubs and I'll teach you the game."

"That's very good of you," answered the boy in the straw

hat, " and I'm very much obliged, but I don't think I'll have time. You see I'm in the upper middle, and they say that it's awfully hard to keep up with. Still, I should really like to try my hand at it, and if I have time I'll ask you to show me a little about it. I expect you're the best player here, aren't you? " West, extremely gratified, tried to conceal his pleasure.

" Oh, I don't know. There's Wesley Blair—he's captain of the school eleven, you know—he plays a very good game, only he has a way of missing short puts. And then there's Louis Whipple. The only thing about Whipple is that he tries to play with too few clubs. He says a fellow can play just as well with a driver and a putter and a niblick as he can with a dozen clubs. Of course, that's nonsense. If Whipple would use some brains about his clubs he'd make a rather fair player. There are one or two other fellows in school who are not so bad. But I believe," magnanimously, " that if Blair had more time for practicing he could beat *me*." West allowed his hearer a moment in which to digest this. The straw hat was tilted down over the eyes of its wearer, who was gazing thoughtfully over the river.

" I suppose he's kept pretty busy with football."

" Yes, he's daft about it. Otherwise he's a fine chap. By the way, where'd you learn to kick a ball that way? "

" On the farm. I used to practice when I didn't have

much to do, which wasn't very often. Jerry Green and I—Jerry's our hired man—we used to get out in the cow pasture and kick. Then I played a year with our grammar-school eleven."

"Well, that was great work. If you could only drive a golf ball like that! Say, what's your name?"

"Joel March."

"Mine's Outfield West. The fellows call me 'Out' West. My home's in Pleasant City, Iowa. You come from Maine, don't you?"

"Yes; Marchdale. It's just a corner store and a blacksmith shop and a few houses. We've lived there—our family, I mean—for over a hundred years."

"Phew!" whistled West. "Dad's the oldest settler in our county, and he's been there only forty years. Great gobble! We'd better be scooting back to school. Come on. I'm all right now, though I *was* a bit lame after that tumble."

The two boys scrambled up the bank and set out along the river path. The sun had gone down behind the mountains, and purple shadows were creeping up from the river. The tower of the Academy Building still glowed crimson where the sun-rays shone on the windows.

"Where's your room?" asked West.

"Thirty-four Masters Hall," answered Joel March; for now that we have twice been introduced to him there is no excuse for us to longer ignore his name.

"Mine's in Hampton House," said West. "Number 2. I have it all to myself. Who's in with you?"

"A fellow named Sproule."

"'Dickey' Sproule? He's an awful cad. Why didn't you get a room in the village? You have lots more fun there; and you can get a better room too; although some of the rooms in Warren are not half bad."

"They cost too much," replied March. "You see, father's not very well off, and can't help me much. He pays my tuition, and I've enough money of my own that I've earned working out to make up the rest. So, of course, I've got to be careful."

"Well, you're a queer chap!" exclaimed West.

"Why?" asked Joel March.

"Oh, I don't know. Wanting to study, and earning your own schooling, and that sort of thing."

"Oh, I suppose your father has plenty of money, hasn't he?"

"Gobs! I have twenty dollars a month allowance for pocket money."

"I wish I had," answered March. "You must have a good deal saved up by the end of the year." West stared.

"Saved? Why, I'm dead broke this minute. And I owe three bills in town. Don't tell any one, because it's against the rules to have bills, you know. Anyhow, what's the good of saving? There's lots more." It was March's turn to stare.

"What do you spend it for?" he asked.

"Oh, golf clubs and balls, and cakes and pies and things," answered West carelessly. "Then a fellow has to dress a little, or the other fellows look down on you."

"Do they?" March cast a glance over his own worn apparel. "Then I guess I must try their eyes a good deal."

"Well, I wouldn't care—much," answered West half-heartedly. "Though of course that hat——"

"Yes, I suppose it is a little late for straws." West nodded heartily. "I was going to get a felt in Boston, but —well, I saw something else I wanted worse; and it was my own money."

"What was it?" asked West curiously.

"A book." West whistled.

"Well, you can get a pretty fair one in the village at Grove's. And—and a pair of trousers if you want them."

March nodded, noncommittingly. They had reached the gymnasium.

"I'm going in for a shower," said West. "You'd better come along." March shook his head.

"I guess not to-night. It's most supper time, and I want to read a little first. Good-night."

"Good-night," answered West. "I'm awfully much obliged for what you did, you know. Come and see me to-morrow if you can; Number 2 Hampton. Good-night."

Joel March turned and retraced his steps to his dormitory.

He found his roommate reading at the table when he entered Number 34. Sproule looked up and observed:

"I saw you with Outfield West a moment ago. It looks rather funny for a 'grind,' as you profess to be, hobnobbing with a Hampton House swell."

"I haven't professed to be a 'grind,'" answered Joel quietly, as he opened his Greek.

"Well, your actions profess it. And West will drop you quicker than a hot cake when he finds it out. Why, he never studies a lick! None of those Hampton House fellows do."

March made no answer, but presently asked, in an effort to be sociable:

"What are you reading?"

"The Three Cutters; ever read it?"

"No; what's it about?"

"Oh, pirates and smuggling and such."

"I should think it would be first rate."

"It is. I'd let you take it after I'm through, only it isn't mine; I borrowed it from Billy Cozzens."

"Thanks," answered Joel, "but I don't believe I'd have time for it."

"Humph!" grunted Sproule. "There you are again, putting on airs. Just wait until you've been here two or three months; I guess I won't hear so much about study then."

Joel received this taunt in silence, and, burying his head in his hands, tackled the story of Cyrus the Younger. Joel

had already come to a decision regarding Richard Sproule, a decision far from flattering to that youth. But in view of the fact that the two were destined to spend much of their time together, Joel recognized the necessity of making the best of his roommate, and of what appeared to be an unsatisfactory condition. During the two days that Joel had been in school Sproule had nagged him incessantly upon one subject or another, and so far Joel had borne the persecution in silence. "But some day," mused Joel, "I'll just *have* to punch his head!"

Richard Sproule was a member of the senior class, and monitor for the floor upon which he had his room. He had, perhaps, no positive meanness in him. Most of his unpleasantness was traceable to envy. Just at present he was cultivating a dislike for Joel because of the latter's enviable success at lessons and because a resident of Hampton House had taken him up. Sproule cared nothing for out-of-door amusements and hated lessons. His whole time, except when study was absolutely compulsory, was taken up with the reading of books of adventure; and Captain Marryat and Fenimore Cooper were far closer acquaintances than either Cicero or Cæsar. Richard Sproule was popularly disliked and shunned.

In the dining hall that evening Joel ate and relished his first hearty meal since he had arrived at Hillton. The exercise had brought back a naturally good appetite, which had been playing truant.

The dining hall takes up most of the ground floor of Warren Hall. Eight long, roomy tables are arranged at intervals, with broad aisles between, through which the white-aproned waiters hurry noiselessly about. To-night there was a cheerful clatter of spoons and forks and a loud babel of voices, and Joel found himself hugely enjoying the novelty of eating in the presence of more than a hundred and fifty other lads. Outfield West and his neighbors in Hampton House occupied a far table, and there the noise was loudest. West was dressed like a young prince, and his associates were equally as splendid. As Joel observed them, West glanced across and saw him, and waved a hilarious greeting with a soup spoon. Joel nodded laughingly back, and then settled in his chair with an agreeable sensation of being among friends. This feeling grew when, toward the end of his meal, Wesley Blair, in leaving the hall, saw him and stopped beside his chair.

"How did you get on this afternoon?" Blair asked pleasantly.

"Very well, thanks," Joel replied.

"That's good. By the way, go and see Mr. Beck to-morrow and get examined. Tell him I sent you. You'll find him at the gym at about eleven. And don't forget to show up to-morrow at practice."

The elder youth passed on, leaving Joel the center of interest for several moments. His left-hand neighbor, a boy who affected very red neckties, and who had hitherto dis-

played no interest in his presence, now turned and asked if he knew Blair.

"No," replied Joel. "I met him only to-day on the football field."

"Are you on the 'Leven?"

"No, but I'm trying for it."

"Well, I guess you'll make it; Blair doesn't often go out of his way to encourage any one."

"I hope I shall," answered Joel. "Who is Mr. Beck, please?"

"He's director of the gym. You have to be examined, you know; if you don't come up to requirements you can't go in for football."

"Oh, thank you." And Joel applied himself to his pudding, and wondered if there was any possibility of his not passing.

Apparently there was not; for when, on the following day, he presented himself at the gymnasium, he came through the ordeal of measurement and test with flying colors, and with the command to pay special attention to the chest-weights, was released, at liberty to "go in" for any sport he liked.

Despite his forebodings, the studies proved not formidable, and at four o'clock Joel reported for football practice with a comforting knowledge of duties performed. An hour and a half of steady practice, consisting of passing, falling, and catching punts, left the inexperienced candidates in a

state of breathless collapse when Blair dismissed the field. West did not turn up at the gridiron, but a tiny scarlet speck far off on the golf links proclaimed his whereabouts.

On the way back to the grounds a number of youthful juniors, bravely arrayed in their first suits of football togs, loudly denounced the vigor of the practice, and pantingly made known to each other their intentions to let the school get along as best it might without their assistance on its eleven. They would be no great loss, thought Joel, as he trudged along in the rear of the procession, and their resignation would probably save Blair the necessity of incurring their dislikes when the process of "weeding-out" began.

Although no special attention had been given to Joel during practice, yet he had been constantly aware of Blair's observation, and had known that several of the older fellows were watching his work with interest. His feat of the previous day had already secured to him a reputation throughout the school, and as the little groups of boys passed him he heard himself alluded to as "the country fellow that punted fifty yards yesterday," or "the chap that made that kick." And when the three long, steep flights of Masters confronted him he took them two steps at a time, and arrived before the door of Number 34 breathless, but as happy as a schoolboy can be.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEAD COACH.

"UPPER MIDDLE CLASS: Members will meet at the gym at 2.15, to march to depot and meet Mr. Remsen.

"LOUIS WHIPPLE, *Pres't.*"

This was the notice pasted on the board in Academy Building the morning of Joel's fifth day at school. Beside it were similar announcements to members of the other classes. As he stood in front of the board Joel felt a hand laid on his shoulder, and turned to find Outfield West by his side.

"Are you going along?" asked that youth.

"I don't believe so," answered Joel. "I have a Latin recitation at two."

"Well, chuck it! Everybody is going—and the band, worse luck!"

"Is there a band?" West threw up his hands in mock despair.

"Is there a *band? Is* there a band! Mr. March, your ignorance surprises and pains me. It is quite evident that

you have never heard the Hillton Academy Band; no one who has ever heard it forgets. Yes, my boy, there *is* a band, and it plays Washington Post, and Hail Columbia, and Hilltonians; and then it plays them all over again."

"But I thought Mr. Remsen was not coming until Saturday?"

"That," replied West, confidentially, "was his intention, but he heard of a youngster up here who is such an astonishingly fine punter that he decided to come at once and see for himself; and so he telegraphed to Blair this morning. And you and I, my lad, will March—see?—with the procession, and sing—

> "'Hilltonians, Hilltonians, your crimson banner fling
> Unto the breeze, and 'neath its folds your anthem loudly sing!
> Hilltonians! Hilltonians! we stand to do or die,
> Beneath the flag, the crimson flag, that waves for victory!'"

And, seizing Joel by the arm, West dragged him out of the corridor and down the steps into the warm sunlight of a September noon, chanting the school song at the top of his voice. A group of boys on the Green shouted lustily back, and the occupant of a neighboring window threw a cushion with unerring precision at West's head. Stopping to deposit this safely amid the branches halfway up an elm tree, the two youths sped across the yard toward Warren Hall and the dinner table.

"You sit at our table, March," announced West. "Digbee's away, and you can have his seat. Come on." Joel

followed, and found himself in the coveted precincts of the Hampton House table, and was introduced to five youths, who received him very graciously, and invited him to partake of such luxuries as pickled walnuts and peach marmalade. Joel was fast making the discovery that to be vouched for by Outfield West invariably secured the highest consideration.

"I've been telling March here that it is his bounden duty to go to the station," announced West to the table at large.

"Of course it is," answered Cooke and Cartwright and Somers, and two others whose names Joel did not catch. "The wealth, beauty, and fashion will attend in a body," continued Cooke, a stout, good-natured-looking boy of about nineteen, who, as Joel afterward learned, was universally acknowledged to be the dullest scholar in school. "Patriotism and—er—school spirit, you know, March, demand it." And Cooke helped himself bountifully to West's cherished bottle of catsup.

"This is Remsen's last year as coach, you see," explained West, as he rescued the catsup. "I believe every fellow feels that we ought to show our appreciation of his work by turning out in force. It's the least we can do, I think. Mind you, I don't fancy football a little bit, but Remsen taught us to win from St. Eustace last year, and any one that helps down Eustace is all right and deserves the gratitude of the school and all honest folk."

"Hear! hear!" cried Somers.

"I'd like very well to go," said Joel, "but I've got a recitation at two." Cooke looked across at him sorrowfully.

"Are you going in for study?" he asked.

"I'm afraid so," answered Joel laughingly.

"My boy, don't do it. There's nothing gained. I've tried it, and I speak from sad experience."

"But how do you get through?" questioned Joel.

"I will tell you." The stout youth leaned over and lowered his voice to a confidential whisper. "I belong to the same society as 'Wheels,' and he doesn't dare expel me."

"I wish," said Joel in the laugh that followed, "that I could join that society."

"Easy enough," answered Cooke earnestly. "I will put your name up at our next meeting. All you have to do is to forget all the Greek and Latin and higher mathematics you ever knew, give your oath never to study again, and appear at chapel two consecutive mornings in thigh boots and a plaid ulster."

Despite West's pleas Joel refused to "cut" his recitation, promising, however, to follow to the station as soon as he might.

"It's only a long mile," West asserted. "If you cut across Turner's meadow you'll make it in no time. And the train isn't due until three. You'll see me standing on the truck." And so Joel had promised, and later, from the seclusion of the schoolroom, which to-day was well-nigh empty,

had heard the procession take its way down the road, headed by the school band, which woke the echoes with the brave strains of the Washington Post March.

To-day the Æneid lost much of its interest, and when the recitation was over Joel clapped his new brown felt hat on his head—for West had conducted him to the village outfitter the preceding day—and hurried up to his room to leave his book and pad. "Dickey" Sproule was stretched out upon the lounge—a piece of personal property of which he was very proud—reading Kenilworth.

"Hello!" cried Joel, "why aren't you over at the lab? Isn't this your day for exploding things?" Sproule looked up and yawned.

"Oh, I cut it. What's the good of knowing a lot of silly chemistry stuff when you're going to be an author?"

"I should say it might be very useful to you; but I've never been an author, and perhaps I'm mistaken. Want to go to the station?"

"What, to meet that stuck-up Remsen? I guess not. Catch me walking a mile and a half to see him!"

"Well, I'm going," answered Joel. An inarticulate growl was the only response, and Joel took the stairs at leaps and bounds, and nearly upset Mrs. Cowles in the lower hall.

"Dear me, Mr. March!" she exclaimed, as together they gathered up a load of towels, "is it only you, then? I thought surely it was a dozen boys at least."

"I'm very sorry," laughed Joel. "I'm going to the sta-

tion. Mr. Remsen is coming, you know. Have I spoiled these?"

"No, indeed. So Mr. Remsen's coming. Well, run along. I'd go myself if I wasn't an old woman. I knew Mr. Remsen ten years ago, and a more bothersome lad we never had. He had Number 15, and we never knew what to expect next. One week he'd set the building on fire with his experiments, and the next he'd break all the panes in the window with his football. But then he was such a nice boy!" And with this seemingly contradictory statement the Matron trudged away with her armful of towels, and Joel took up his flight again, across the yard to Academy Road, and thence over the fence into Turner's meadows, where the hill starts on its rise to the village. Skirting the hill, he trudged on until presently the station could be seen in the distance. And as he went he reviewed the five days of his school existence.

He remembered the strange feeling of loneliness that had oppressed him on his arrival, when, just as the sun was setting over the river, he had dropped down from the old stage coach in front of Academy Hall, a queer-looking, shabbily dressed country boy with a dilapidated leather valise and a brown paper parcel almost as big. He remembered the looks of scorn and derision that had met him as he had taken his way to the office, and, with a glow at his heart, the few simple, kindly words of welcome and the firm grasp of the hand from the Principal. Then came the first day at school,

with the dread examinations, which after all turned out to be fairly easy, thanks to Joel's faculty for remembering what he had once learned. He remembered, too, the disparaging remarks of "Dickey" Sproule, who had predicted Joel's failure at the "exams." "Who ever heard," Sproule had asked scornfully, "of a fellow making the upper middle class straight out of a country grammar school, without any coaching?" But when the lists were posted, Joel's name was down, and Sproule had taken deep offense thereat. "The school's going to the dogs," he had complained. "Examinations aren't nearly as hard as they were when *I* entered."

The third day, when he had kicked that football down the field, and, later, had made the acquaintance of Outfield West, seemed now to have been the turning point from gloom to sunshine. Since then Joel had changed from the unknown, derided youth in the straw hat to some one of importance; a some one to whom the captain of the school eleven spoke whenever they met, a chum of the most envied boy in the Academy, and a candidate for the football team for whom every fellow predicted success.

But, best of all, in those few days he had gained the liking of well-nigh all of the teachers by the hearty way in which he pursued knowledge; for he went at Cæsar as though he were trying for a touch-down, and tackled the Foundations of Rhetoric as though that study was an opponent on the grid-

iron. Even Professor Durkee, known familiarly among the disrespectful as "Turkey," lowered his tones and spoke with something approaching to mildness when addressing Joel March. Altogether, the world looked very bright to Joel to-day, and when, as presently, he drew near to the little stone depot, the sounds of singing and cheering that greeted his ears chimed in well with his mood.

Truly "all Hillton" had turned out! The station platform and the trim graveled road surrounding it were dark with Hilltonian humanity and gay with crimson bunting. Afar down the road a shrill long whistle announced the approach of the train, and a comparative hush fell on the crowd. Joel descried Outfield West at once, and pushed his way to him through the throng just as the train came into sight down the track. West was surrounded on the narrow baggage truck by some half dozen of the choice spirits from Hampton House, and Joel's advent was made the occasion for much sport.

"Ah, he comes! The Professor comes!" shouted West.

"He tears himself from his studies and joins us in our frivolity," declaimed Cooke.

"That's something you'll never have a chance of doing, Tom," answered Cartwright, as Joel was hauled on to the truck. "You'll never get near enough to a study to have to be torn away."

"Study, my respected young friend," answered Cooke

gravely, "is the bane of the present unenlightened age. In the good old days when everybody was either a Greek or a Roman or a barbarian, and so didn't have to study languages, and——"

"Shut up! here's the train," cried West. "Now every fellow cheer, or he'll have me to fight."

"Hooray! hooray! hooray!" yelled Cooke.

"Somebody punch him, please," begged West, and Somers and another obliging youth thrust the offender off the truck and sat on his head. The train slowed down, stopped, and a porter appeared laden with a huge valise. This was the signal for a rush, and the darkey was instantly relieved of his burden and hustled back grinning to the platform.

Then Joel caught sight of a gentleman in a neat suit of gray tweed descending the steps, and saw the pupils heave and push their ways toward him; and for a sight the arrival was hidden from view. Then the cheers for "Coach!" burst enthusiastically forth, the train was speeding from sight up the track, the band was playing Hilltonians, and the procession took up its march back to the Academy.

When he at last caught a fair sight of Stephen Remsen, Joel saw a man of about twenty-eight years, gayly trudging at the head of the line, his handsome face smiling brightly as he replied to the questions and sallies of the more elderly youths who surrounded him. Joel's heart went out to

Stephen Remsen at once. And neither then nor at any future time did he wonder at it.

"That," thought Joel, "is the kind of fellow I'd like for a big brother. Although I never *could* grow big enough to lick him."

CHAPTER V.

A RAINY AFTERNOON.

THE following day Joel arrived on the football field to discover the head coach in full charge. He was talking earnestly to Wesley Blair. His dress was less immaculate than upon the preceding afternoon, although not a whit less attractive to Joel. A pair of faded and much-darned red-and-black striped stockings were surmounted by a pair of soiled and patched moleskin trousers. His crimson jersey had faded at the shoulders to a pathetic shade of pink, and one sleeve was missing, having long since "gone over to the enemy." In contrast to these articles of apparel was his new immaculate canvas jacket, laced for the first time but a moment before. But he looked the football man that he was from head to toe, and Joel admired him immensely and was extremely proud when, as he was passing, Blair called him over and introduced him to Remsen. The latter shook hands cordially, and allowed his gaze to travel appreciatingly over Joel's five feet eight inches of bone and muscle.

"I'm glad to know you, March," he said, "and glad that you are going to help us win."

The greeting was so simple and sincere that Joel ran down the field a moment later, feeling that football honors were even more desirable than before. To-day the throng of candidates had dwindled down to some forty, of whom perhaps twenty were new men. The first and second elevens were lined up for the first time, and Joel was placed at left half in the latter. An hour of slow practice followed. The ball was given to the first eleven on almost every play, and as the second eleven were kept entirely on the defensive, Joel had no chance to show his ability at either rushing or kicking. Remsen was everywhere at once, scolding, warning, and encouraging in a breath, and the play took on a snap and vim which Wesley Blair, unassisted, had not been able to introduce. After it was over, Joel trotted back with the others to the gymnasium and took his first shower bath. On the steps outside was West, and the two boys took their way together to the Academy Building.

"Did you hear Remsen getting after Bart Cloud?" asked West.

"No. Who is Cloud?"

"He plays right half or left half, I forget which, on the first eleven," answered West, "and he's about the biggest cad in the school. His father's an alderman in New York, they say, and has lots of money; but he doesn't let Bart handle much of it for him. He played on the team last year and did good work. But this season he's got a swelled head and thinks he doesn't have to play to keep his place;

thinks it's mortgaged to him, you see. Remsen opened his eyes to-day, I guess! Whipple says Remsen called him down twice, and then told him if he didn't take a big brace he'd lose his position. Cloud got mad and told Clausen—Clausen's his chum—that if he went off the team he'd leave school. I guess few of us would be sorry. Bartlett Cloud's a coward from the toes up, March, and if he tries to make it unpleasant for you, why, just offer to knock him down and he'll change his tune."

"Thank you for telling me," responded Joel, "but I don't expect to have much to do with him; I don't like his looks. I know the boy you mean, now. He's the fellow that called me names—'Country,' you know, and such—the first day we had practice. I heard him, but didn't let on. I didn't mind much, but it didn't win my love." West laughed uproariously and slapped Joel on the back.

"Oh, you're a queer sort, March. I'd have had a fight on the spot. But you— Say, you're going to be an awful grind, March, if you keep on in your present terrible course. You won't have time for any fun at all. And I was going to teach you golf, you know. It's not nice of you, it really isn't."

"I'll play golf with you the first afternoon we don't have practice, West, honestly. I'm awfully sorry I'm such a crank about lessons, but you see I've made up my mind to try for the—the—what scholarship is that?"

"Carmichael?" suggested West. Joel shook his head.

"No, the big one." West stared.

"Do you mean the Goodwin scholarship?"

"Yes, that's the one," answered Joel. West whistled.

"Well, you're not modest to hurt, March. Why, man, that's a terror! You have to have the Greek alphabet backward, and never miss chapel all term to get a show at that. The Goodwin brings two hundred and forty dollars!"

"That's why I want it," answered Joel. "If I win it it will pay my expenses for this year and part of next."

"Well, of course I hope you'll make it," answered West, "but I don't believe you have much show. There's Knox, and Reeves, and—and two or three others all trying for it. Knox won the Schall scholarship last year. That carries two hundred even."

"Well, anyhow, I'll try hard," answered Joel resolutely.

"Of course. You ought to have it; you need it. Did I tell you that I won a Masters scholarship in my junior year? Yes, I did really. It was forty dollars. I remember that I bought two new putters and a jolly fine caddie bag."

"You could do better than that if you'd try, West. You're awfully smart."

"Who? Me?" laughed West. "Pshaw! I can't do any more than pass my exams. Of course I'm smart enough when it comes to lofting out of a bad lie or choosing a good club; but——" He shook his head doubtfully, but nevertheless seemed pleased at the idea.

"No, I mean in other ways," continued Joel earnestly. "You could do better than half the fellows if you tried. And I wish you would try, West. You rich fellows in Hampton House could set such a good example for the youngsters if you only would. As it is, they admire you and envy you and think that it's smart to give all their time to play. I know, because I heard some of them talking about it the other day. 'You don't have to study,' said one; 'look at those swells in Hampton. They just go in for football and golf and tennis and all that, and they never have any trouble about passing exams.'" West whistled in puzzled amazement.

"Why, March, you're setting out as a reformer; and you're talking just like one of those good boys in the story books. What's up?" Joel smiled at the other boy's look of wonderment.

"Nothing's up, except that I want you to promise to study more. Of course, I know it sounds cheeky, West, but I don't mean to meddle in your business. Only—only——" Joel hesitated.

"Only what? Out with it!" said West. They had reached the Academy Building and had paused on the steps.

"Well, only—that you've been very kind to me, West, and I hate to see you wasting your time and know that you will wish you hadn't later, when you've left school, you know. That's all. It isn't that I want to meddle——" There was a moment of silence. Then:

"The idea of your caring!" answered West. "You're a good chap, March, and—I tell you what I'll do. I *will* go in more for lessons, after next week. You see there's the golf tournament next Saturday week, and I've got to put in a lot of hard practice between now and then. But after that I'll try and buckle down. You're right about it, March, I ought to do more studying, and I will *try;* although I don't believe I'll make much of a success as a 'grind.' And as to the—the—the rest that you said, why, I haven't been extraordinarily kind; I just sort of took to you that day on the campus because you looked to be such a plucky, go-ahead, long-legged chap, you know. I thought I'd rescue you from the ranks of the lowly and teach you golf and make a man of you generally. Instead of that"—West gave one of his expressive whistles—"instead of that, why, here you are turning me into a regular 'Masters Hall grind.' Thus do our brightest dreams fade. Well, I'm off. Don't forget the upper middle class meeting to-night. They're going to vote on the Class Crew question, and we want all the votes we can get to down the fellows that don't want to pay the assessment. Good-night."

And Outfield West took himself off toward his room, his broad shoulders well back, and his clear, merry voice singing the school song as he strode along. Joel turned into the library, feeling well satisfied with the result of his meddling, to pore over a reference book until supper time.

The following morning Joel awoke to find a cold rain

falling from a dull sky. The elms in the yard were dripping from every leaf and branch, and the walks held little gray pools that made the trip to breakfast a series of splashes. In the afternoon Joel got into his oldest clothes and tramped over to Hampton House. The window of West's room looked bright and cheerful, for a big wood fire was blazing on the hearth within. Joel kicked the mud from his shoes, and passing through the great white door with its old-fashioned fanlight above, tapped at West's room. A faint response from beyond the portal summoned him in.

The owner of the room was sandpapering a golf shaft before the fire, and a deep expression of discontent was on his face. But his countenance lighted up at sight of his visitor, and he leaped to his feet and drew a second arm-chair before the hearth.

"You're a brick, March! I was just wishing you roomed near enough so that I could ask you to come over and talk a bit. Isn't it a horrible day?"

"It's awfully wet; but then it has to rain sometimes, I suppose," answered Joel as he took off his overcoat.

"Yes, but it doesn't have to rain just when a fellow has fixed to practice golf, does it?" West growled. Joel laughed.

"I thought the real, simon-pure golfer didn't mind the weather."

"He doesn't as long as he can get over the ground, but the links here is like a quagmire when it rains. But never

mind, we'll have a good chummy afternoon. And I've got some bully gingersnaps. Do you like gingersnaps?" Joel replied in the affirmative, and West produced a box of them from under the bed.

"I have to keep these kinds of things hid, you know, because Blair and Cooke and the rest of the fellows would eat them all up. By the way, I made up a list of the things you'll have to get if you're going in for golf. Here it is. Of course, I only put down one of each, and only a dozen balls. I'll get the catalogue and we'll reckon up and see how much they come to."

"But I don't think I can afford to buy anything like this, West," answered Joel doubtfully.

"Nonsense! you've got to! A fellow has to have *necessities!* What's the first thing on the list? Read 'em off, will you?"

"Driving cleek," read Joel.

"Yes, but never mind the clubs. There are seven of them on the list and you can get pretty fair ones for a dollar and a half each. What's next?"

"But that makes ten dollars and a half," cried Joel.

"Of course it does. And cheap enough, too. Why, some of mine cost three dollars apiece! What's next?"

"One dozen Silvertowns."

"Correct; four dollars. Mark it down. Next?"

"Caddie bag," responded Joel faintly.

"A dollar and a half. Next."

"But, West, I can't afford these things."

"Nonsense, March! Still—well, you can call the bag a dollar even; though the dollar ones aren't worth much. Mine cost five."

"But you have coat and trousers down. And shoes, and——"

"Well, you can leave the shoes out, and get some hobnails and put them on the soles of any good heavy shoes. Then there's gloves. They cost about a dollar and a half. As for trousers, you *can* do with ordinary ones, but—you've got to have a coat, March. A chap can't swing a club in a tight-fitting jacket like the one you've got on. Now let's reckon up."

"There's no use in doing that, West," laughed Joel. "I can't buy one of these things, to say nothing of the whole list. I'm saving up for my football togs, and after I have those I sha'n't be able to buy anything else for months."

West settled his chin in his hand and scowled at the flames. "It's too bad, March; and I put your name up for the Golf Club, too. You will join that, won't you? You must, now that I've put you up. It's only a dollar initiation fee and fifty cents dues."

"Very well, then, I'll join the club," answered Joel. "Though I don't see what use there is in it, since I haven't anything to play with and wouldn't know how to play if I had."

"Well, I'm going to teach you, you know. And as for

clubs and things, why, I've got some oldish ones that will do fairly well; a beginner doesn't need extra good ones, you see. And then, for clothes—well, I guess fellows *have* played in ordinary trousers and coat; and I've played myself in tennis shoes. And if you don't mind cold hands, why, you needn't have gloves. So, after all, we'll get on all right." West was quite cheerful again and, with a wealth of clubs—divers, spoons, bulgers, putters, baps, niblicks, and many other sorts—on the rug before him, chattered on about past deeds of prowess on the links until the room grew dark and the lamps in the yard shone fitfully through the rain, by which time a dozen clubs in various states of repair had been laid aside, the gingersnaps had been totally demolished, and West had forgotten all about the meanness of the weather and his lost practice.

Then Cooke and Somers demanded admission, to the annoyance of both West and Joel, and the lamps were lighted, and Joel said good-night and hurried back to his room in order to secure a half hour's study ere supper time.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRACTICE GAME.

"First and second Eleven rushes and quarters down the field and practice formations. Backs remain here to kick!" shouted Wesley Blair.

It was a dull and cold afternoon. The last recitation was over and half the school stood shivering about the grid-iron or played leapfrog to keep warm. Stephen Remsen, in the grimiest of moleskins, stood talking to the captain, and, in obedience to the command of the latter, some fifteen youths, clad for the coming fray, were trotting down the field, while eight others, backs and substitute backs on the two teams, passed and dropped on the pigskin in an endeavor to keep warm.

The first and second elevens were to play their first real game of the season at four o'clock, and meanwhile the players were down for a stiff thirty minutes of practice. Joel March shivered with the rest of the backs and waited for the coach and the captain to finish their consultation. Presently Blair trotted off down the field and Remsen turned to the backs.

"Browne, Meach, and Turner, go down to about the

middle of the field and return the balls. Cloud, take a ball over nearer the side-line and try some drop-kicks. Post, you do the same, please. And let me see, what is your name?" addressing a good-looking and rather slight youth. "Ah, yes, Clausen. Well, Clausen, you and Wills try some punts over there, and do try and get the leg swing right. March, take that ball and let me see you punt."

Then began a time of sore tribulation for Joel; for not until ten minutes had passed did the ball touch his toe. His handling was wrong, his stepping out was wrong, and his leg-swing was very, very wrong! But he heard never a cross word from his instructor, and so shut his lips tight and bore the lecture in good-humored silence.

"There," announced Remsen finally, "that's a lot better. Now kick." Joel caught the ball nicely, and sent it sailing far down the field.

"That's a good kick, but it would have been better had you landed higher up on your foot. Try and catch the ball just in front of the arch of the foot. You take it about on the toe-cap. Remember that the broader the surface that propels the ball the greater will be the accuracy—that is, the ball has less chance of sliding off to one side when the striking surface is large. Here's your ball coming. Now try again, and remember what I have said about the swing at the hip. Forget that you have any joints at all, and just let the right side of you swing round as it will."

Then Remsen passed on to the next man and Joel pegged away, doing better and better, as he soon discovered, every try, until a whistle blew from the middle of the field and the players gathered about the captains on the fifty-five-yard line. Joel was down to play left half on the second eleven, and beside him, at right, was Wills, a promising lower middle boy, who was an excellent runner, but who, so far, had failed to develop any aptitude for kicking. Cloud and Clausen occupied similar positions on the first eleven, and behind them stood Wesley Blair, the best full-back that Hillton Academy had possessed for many years. The full-back on the second eleven was Ned Post, a veteran player, but "as erratic as a mule," to use the words of Stephen Remsen.

The first eleven was about six pounds heavier in the line than the team captained by Louis Whipple, who played at quarter, and about the same weight behind the line. It was a foregone conclusion that the first would win, but whether the second would score was a mooted point. Joel felt a bit nervous, now that he was in his first game of consequence, but forgot all about it a moment later when the whistle blew and Greer, the big first eleven center, tore through their line for six yards, followed by Wallace Clausen with the ball. Then there was a delay, for the right half when he tried to arise found that his ankle was strained, and so had to limp off the ground supported by Greer and Barnard, the one-hundred-and-sixty-pound right tackle. Turner, a

new player, went on, and the ball was put in play again, this time for a try through left tackle. But the second's line held like a stone wall, and the runner was forced back with the loss of a yard. Then the first eleven guards fell back, and when the formation hit the second's line the latter broke like paper, and the first streamed through for a dozen yards. And so it went until the second found itself only a few yards from its goal line. There, with the backs pressed close against the forwards, the second held and secured the ball on downs, only to lose it again by a fumble on the part of Post. Then a delayed pass gained two yards for the first and a mass at left tackle found another. But the next play resulted disastrously, for when the ball was passed back there was no one to take it, and the quarter was borne back several yards before his own astounded players could come to his assistance.

"That about settles Cloud," whispered Post to Joel, as they hurried up to take the new position. "That was his signal to take the leather through right end, and he was fast asleep. Remsen's laying for him."

But the advantage to the second was of short duration, for back went the first's guards again, and down came the ball to their goal line with short, remorseless gains, and presently, when their quarter knelt on the last white line, the dreaded happened, and Blair lay between the posts with half the second eleven on top of him, but with the ball a yard over the line. An easy goal resulted, and just as the

teams trotted back to midfield the whistle sounded, and the first twenty-minute half was done.

The players wrapped themselves warmly in blankets and squatted in the protection of the fence, and were immediately surrounded by the spectators. Remsen and Blair talked with this player and that, explaining his faults or saying a good word for his work. In the second half many of the second eleven went into the first, the deposed boys retiring to the side-lines, and several substitutes were put into the second. Joel went back to full, Ned Post taking Clausen's place at right half on the first eleven and Turner becoming once more a spectator.

It was the second eleven's ball, and Joel raced down the field after the kick-off as far as their twenty-yard line, and there caught Blair's return punt very neatly, ran three yards under poor interference, and was then seized by the mighty Greer and hurled to earth with a shock that completely took the breath out of him for a moment. But he was soon on his feet again, and Whipple gave him an encouraging slap as he trotted back to his place. The next play was an ordinary formation with the ends back, and the ball passed to left end for a run back of quarter and through the line outside of guard. It worked like a charm, and left end sped through with Joel bracing him at the turn and the left half going ahead. Four yards were netted, Meach, the substitute left half, being tackled by Post. In the mix-up that followed Joel found himself sprawling over the runner, with

Cloud sitting astride the small of his back, a very uncomfortable part of the body with which to support a weighty opponent. But he would not have minded that alone; but when Cloud arose his foot came into violent contact with Joel's head, which caused that youth to see stars, and left a small cut back of his ear.

"That wasn't an accident," muttered Joel, as he picked himself up and eyed Cloud. But the latter was unconcernedly moving to his position, and Joel gave his head a shake or two and resolved to forgive and forget. A play similar to the last was next tried with an outlet on the other side, outside tackle. But it resulted in a loss of a yard, and at the next down the ball was thrown back to Joel, who made a poor catch and followed it with a short high punt to the opponent's forty yards.

"Your head's cut, March," said Wills, as they took up the new position. Joel nodded. "Cloud," he answered briefly.

"Punch him," answered Wills. "He's mad because he made such a bull of his play in the other half. If he tries tricks with me——"

"If he does, let him alone, if you want to stay on the team," said Joel. "That sort of thing doesn't help. Watch your chance and spoil a play of his. That's the best way to get even."

The next ten minutes were spent in desperate attack on the part of the first and an equally desperate defense by

the second eleven. Twenty yards of gain for the former was the result, and the half was nearly up. On a first down Blair ran back and Joel, whispering "Kick!" to himself, turned and raced farther back from the line. Then the ball was snapped, there was a crossing of backs, and suddenly, far out around the right end came Cloud with the pigskin tightly clutched, guarded by Post and the left end. It was an unexpected play, and the second's halfs saw it too late. Meach and Wills were shouldered out of the way, and Cloud ran free from his interference and bore down on Joel, looking very big and ugly.

It was Cloud's opportunity to redeem himself, and with only a green full-back between him and the goal line his chances looked bright indeed. But he was reckoning without his host. Joel started gingerly up to meet him. The field was streaming down on Cloud's heels, but too far away to be in the running. Ten yards distant from Joel, Cloud's right arm stretched out to ward off a tackle, and his face grew ugly.

"Keep off!" he hissed as Joel prepared for a tackle. But Joel had no mind for keeping off; that cut in his head was aching like everything, and his own advice to Wills occurred to him and made him grin. Cloud swerved sharply, but he was too heavy to be a good dodger, and with a leap Joel was on him, tackling hard and true about the runner's hips. Cloud struggled, made a yard, another, then came to earth with Joel's head snugly pillowed on his shoulder. A

shout arose from the crowd. The field came up and Joel scrambled to his feet. Cloud, his face red with chagrin and anger, leaped to his feet, and stepping toward Joel aimed a vicious blow at his face. The latter ducked and involuntarily raised his fist; then, ere Greer and some of the others stepped between, turned and walked away.

"That will do, Cloud," said Remsen in sharp, incisive tones. "You may leave."

And with a muttered word of anger Cloud strode from the field, passing through the silent and unsympathetic throng with pale face and black looks.

"First's ball down here," cried Greer, and play went on; but Joel had lost his taste for it, and when, a few minutes later, neither side having scored again, time was called, he trotted back to the gymnasium in a depressed mood.

"You did great work," exclaimed Outfield West, as he joined Joel on the river path. "That settles Cloud's chances. Remsen was laying for him anyhow, you know, and then that 'slugging!' Remsen hates dirty playing worse than anything, they say."

"I'm sorry it happened, though," returned Joel.

"Pshaw! don't you be afraid of Cloud. He's all bluster."

"I'm not afraid of him. But I'm sorry he lost the team through me. Of course I couldn't have let him go by, and I don't suppose it could have been helped, but I wish some one else had tackled him."

"Of course, it couldn't have been helped," responded

West cheerfully. "And I'm glad it couldn't. My! isn't Cloud mad! I passed him a minute or two ago. 'You ought to try golf, Bart,' said I. You should have seen the look he gave me. I guess it was rather like 'rubbing it in.'" And West grinned hugely at the recollection.

"How about the tournament, West?" asked Joel.

"Fine! There are twelve entries, and we're going to begin at nine in the morning. I did the fourth hole this afternoon in two, and the eighth in three. No one has ever done the fourth in two before; it's the Bogey score. Don't forget that you have promised to go around with me. They say Whipple is practicing every morning over in Turner's meadow. What with that and football he's a pretty busy lad, I dare say. Don't forget, nine o'clock day after to-morrow."

And Outfield West waved his hand gayly and swung off toward Hampton House, while Joel entered the gymnasium and was soon enjoying the luxury of a shower bath and listening to the conversation of the others.

"There'll be a shake-up to-morrow," observed Warren as he rubbed himself dry with a big, crimson-bordered towel. "Mr. Remsen wasn't any too well pleased to-day. He's going to put Greer on the scrub to-morrow."

"That's where you might as well be," answered the big center good-naturedly. "The idea of playing a criss-cross with your right end on the side-line!"

"We took two yards just the same," replied Warren.

"We gave it to you, my lad, because we knew that if you lost on such a fool play your name would be—well, anything but Thomas 'Stumpy' Warren." The reply to this sally was a boot launched at the center rush, for Tom Warren's middle name was in reality Saalfield, and "Stumpy" was a cognomen rather too descriptive to be relished by the quarter-back. Greer returned the missile with interest, and the fight grew warm, and boots and footballs and shin-guards filled the air.

In the dining hall that evening interest was divided between the golf match to be played on the following Saturday morning and the football game with the Westvale Grammar School in the afternoon. Golf had fewer admirers than had the other sport, but what there were were fully as enthusiastic, and the coming tournament was discussed until Joel's head whirled with such apparently outlandish terms as "Bogey," "baffy," "put," "green," "foozle," and "tee."

Whipple, Blair, and West all had their supporters, and Joel learned a number of marvelous facts, as, for instance, that Whipple had "driven from Purgatory to The Hill in five," that Blair was "putting better than Grimes did last year," and that "West had taken four to get out of Sandy." All of which was undoubtedly intensely interesting, but was as so much Sanskrit to Joel; and he walked back to his room after supper with a greatly increased respect for the game of golf.

CHAPTER VII.

A LETTER HOME.

One of Joel's letters written to his mother at about this time contains much that will prove of interest to the reader who has followed the fortunes of that youth thus far. It supplied a certain amount of information appreciated only by its author and its recipient: facts regarding woolen stockings; items about the manner in which the boy's washing was done; a short statement of his financial condition; a weak, but very natural, expression of home-longing. But such I will omit, as being too private in character for these pages.

". . . I don't think you need worry. Outfield West is rather idle about study, but he doesn't give Satan much of a show, for he's about the busiest fellow I know in school. He's usually up a good hour before breakfast, which we have at eight o'clock, and puts in a half hour practicing golf before chapel. Then in the afternoon he's at it again when the weather will let him, and he generally spends his evenings, when not studying, in mending his clubs or painting balls. Then he's one of the canvassers for the class crew; and belongs to the Senior Debating Club, which draws its mem-

bers from the two upper classes; and he's president of the Golf Club. So you can see that he's anything but idle, even if he doesn't bother much about lessons.

"He's naturally a very bright fellow; otherwise he couldn't get along with his classes. I grow to like him better every day; he's such a manly, kind-hearted fellow, and one of the most popular in school. He's rather big, with fine, broad shoulders, and awfully good-looking. He has light-brown hair, about the color of Cousin George's, and bright blue eyes; and he always looks as though he had just got out of the bath-tub—only stopped, of course, to put his clothes on. I guess we must be pretty old-fashioned in our notions, we Maine country folks, because so many of my pet ideas and beliefs have been changed since I came here. You know with us it has always gone without dispute that rich boys are mean and worthless, if not really immoral. But here they're not that way. I guess we never had much chance to study rich people up our way, mother. At the grammar school all the fellows looked down on wealthy boys; but we never had any of them around. The richest chap was Gilbert, whose father was a lumberman, and Gilbert used to wear shoes that you wouldn't give to a tramp.

"I suppose West's father could buy Mr. Gilbert out twenty times and not miss the money. Outfield—isn't it a queer name?—spends a lot of money, but not foolishly; I mean he has no bad habits, like a few of the fellows. I hope you will meet him some time. Perhaps I could have him

up to stay a few days with me next summer. He'd be glad to come.

"No, my roommate, Sproule, doesn't improve any on acquaintance. But I've got so I don't mind him much. I don't think he's really as mean as he makes you believe. He's having hard work with his studies nowadays, and has less time to find fault with things.

"You ask how I spend my time. Dear little mother, you don't know what life in a big boarding school like Hillton is. Why, I haven't an idle moment from one day's end to the next. Here's a sample. This morning I got up just in time for chapel—I'm getting to be a terrible chap for sleeping late— and then had breakfast. By that time it was quarter to nine. At nine I went to my mathematics. Then came Latin, then English. At twelve I reported on the green and practiced signals with the second squad until half past. Then came lunch. After lunch I scurried up to my room and dug up on chemistry, which was at one-thirty. Then came Greek at half past two. Then I had an hour of loafing—that is, I should have had it, but I was afraid of my to-morrow's history, so put in part of the time studying that. At a little before four I hurried over to the gymnasium, got into football togs, and reached the campus 'just in time to be in time.' We had a stiff hour's practice with the ball and learned two new formations. When I got back to the 'gym' it was a quarter past five. I had my bath, rubbed down, did two miles on the track, exercised with the weights,

and got to supper ten minutes late. West came over to the room with me and stayed until I put him out, which was hard work because he's heavier than I am, and I got my books out and studied until half an hour ago. It is now just ten o'clock, and as soon as I finish this I shall tumble into bed and sleep like a top.

"I can't answer your question about Mr. Remsen, because I do not know him well enough to ask about his home or relatives. But his first name is Stephen. Perhaps he is a relative of the Remsens you mention. Some day I'll find out. Anyhow, he's the grandest kind of a fellow. I suppose he's about thirty. He has plenty of money, West says, and is a lawyer by profession. He has coached Hillton for three years, and the school has won two out of three of its big games during those years. The big game, as they call it, is the game on Thanksgiving Day with St. Eustace Academy, of Marshall. This fall it is played here. . . .

"Please tell father that I am getting on well with my studies, but not to hope too much for the Goodwin Scholarship. There are so many, many smart fellows here! Sometimes I think I haven't a ghost of a show. But—well, I'm doing my best, and, after all, there are some other scholarships that are worth getting, though I don't believe I shall be satisfied with any other. West says I'm cheeky to even expect a show at the Goodwin. . . . All the professors are very nice; even 'Turkey.' His real name is Durkee, and he is professor of English. He is not popular among the

fellows, but is an awfully good instructor. The principal, Professor Wheeler, is called 'Wheels,' but it sounds worse than it is. Every one likes him. He is not at all old, and talks to the fellows about football and golf; and West says he can play a fine game of the latter when he tries.

"I have been elected to the Golf Club and have joined. It costs a dollar and a half for this year, but West wanted me to join so much that I did. There are a lot of nice fellows in it—the sort that it is well to know. And I am going to try for the Senior Debating Club after the holidays. . . . Tell father that he wouldn't be so down on football if he could see the fellows that play it here at Hillton. Mr. Remsen is head coach, as I have told you. Then there is an advisory committee of one pupil, one graduate, and one professor. These are Wesley Blair, Mr. Remsen, and Professor MacArthur. Then there is a manager, who looks after the business affairs; and a trainer, who is Professor Beck; and, of course, a captain. Wesley Blair is the captain. The second eleven is captained by Tom Warren, who is a fine player, and who is substitute quarter-back on the first or school eleven. In a couple of weeks both the first and second go to training tables: the first at one of the boarding houses in the village and the second in the school dining hall. When that happens we go into training for sure, and have to be in bed every night at ten sharp and get up every morning at seven. I'm pretty sure now of a place on the second, and may possibly make the first before the season's done. . . .

"Of course, I want the overcoat. But you had better send it as it is, and I will have the tailor here in the village cut it over. He is very moderate in charges and does good work, so West tells me, and in this way it will be sure to fit right. Thank father for me, please. . . . Good-night. . . .

"Your loving son,

"JOEL."

The opportunity to inquire regarding Stephen Remsen's family connections presented itself to Joel on the day preceding the golf tournament and the football game with Westvale. On account of the latter there had been only a half hour of light practice for the two squads, and Joel at half past four had gone to his room to study. But when it came time to puzzle out some problems in geometry Joel found that his paper was used up, and, rather than borrow of his neighbors, he pulled on his cap and started for the village store.

October had brought warm weather, and this afternoon, as he went along the maple-bordered road that leads to the post office he found himself dawdling over the dusty grasses and bushes, recognizing old friends and making new ones, as right-minded folks will when the sun is warm and the birds sing beside the way. He watched a tiny chipmunk scamper along the top of the stone wall and disappear in the branches of a maple, looked upward and saw a mass of fluffy white

clouds going northward, and thought wistfully of spring and the delights it promised here in the Hudson Valley. The golden-rod had passed its prime, though here and there a yellow torch yet lighted the shadowed tangles of shrub and vine beneath the wall, but the asters still bloomed on, and it was while bending over a clump of them that Joel heard the whir of wheels on the smooth road and turned to see a bicyclist speeding toward him from the direction of the academy.

When the rider drew near, Joel recognized Stephen Remsen, and he withdrew toward the wall, that the Coach might have the benefit of the level footpath and avoid the ruts. But instead of speeding by, Remsen slowed down a few feet distant and jumped from his wheel.

"Hello, March!" was his greeting as he came up to that youth. "Are you studying botany?" Joel explained that he had been only trying to identify the aster, a spray of which he had broken off and still held in his hand.

"Perhaps I can tell you what it is," answered Remsen as he took it. "Yes, it's the Purple-Stemmed, *Aster puniceus*. Isn't it common where you live?"

"I've never noticed it," answered Joel. "We have lots of the *Novæ-Angliæ* and *spectabilis* in Maine, and some of the white asters. It must be very lovely about here in spring."

"Yes, it is. Spring is beautiful here, as it is everywhere. The valley of the Hudson is especially rich in flora, I believe.

I used to be very fond of the woods on Mount Adam when I was a boy here at Hillton, and knew every tree in it." They were walking on toward the village, Remsen rolling his bicycle beside him.

"It's a long while since then, I suppose, sir?" queried Joel.

"I graduated from Hillton ten years ago this coming June. I rowed stroke in the boat that spring, and we won from Eustace by an eighth of a mile. And we nearly burned old Masters down to the ground with our Roman candles and sky rockets. You room there, don't you, March?"

"Yes, sir; Number 34."

"That was Billy Mathews's room that year. Some time if you look under the carpet you'll find a depression in the middle of the floor. That's where Billy made a bonfire one night and offered up in sacrifice all his text-books. It took half an hour to put that fire out." Remsen was smiling reminiscently.

"But what did he burn his books for, sir? Was it the end of the year?"

"No, but Billy had been expelled that day, and was celebrating the fact. He was a nice old chap, was Billy Mathews. He's president of a Western railroad now." Joel laughed.

"That bonfire must have made as much commotion as some of the explosions in Number 15, Mr. Remsen."

"Hello! Are my efforts in pursuit of science still remembered here? Who told you about that, March?"

"Mrs. Cowles. She said you were forever doing something terrible, but that you were such a *nice* boy." Remsen laughed heartily as he replied:

"Well, don't pattern your conduct on mine or Mathews's, March. We weren't a very well-behaved lot, I fear. But I don't believe our pranks did much harm. In those days football wasn't as popular as it is to-day, at Hillton, and fellows couldn't work off their surplus animal spirits thumping a pigskin as they can now. Football is a great benefactor in that way, March. It has done away with hazing and street brawls and gate stealing and lots of other deviltry. By the way, how are you getting on with the game?"

"I think I'm getting the hang of it, sir. I'm having a hard time with drop kicking, but I guess I'll learn after a while."

"I'm sure you will. I'm going to have Blair give you a bit of coaching in it next week. He'll have more time then, after he has finished with this golf business. Don't get discouraged. Peg away. It's worth the work, March, and you have the making of a good back as soon as you learn how to kick a goal and run a little faster. And whenever you're puzzled about anything come to me and we'll work it out together. Will you?"

"Yes, sir, thank you."

"That's right. Well, here's where I turn off. Have you time to come and pay me a visit?"

"Not to-day, I'm afraid, Mr. Remsen. I'm just going to the post office for some paper, and——"

"Well, come and see me some time. I'm pretty nearly always at home in the evenings and will be very glad to see you. And bring your friend West with you. That's my headquarters down there, the yellow house; Mrs. Hutchins's. If you cut across the field here it will save you quite a distance. Good-by; and get to bed early to-night, March, if you can. There's nothing like a good sleep before a game."

"Good-by," answered Joel. Then, "Mr. Remsen, one minute, please, sir," he called. "Are you any relation to the Remsens that live near Clairmont, in Maine, sir?"

"Why, I shouldn't wonder," answered Remsen, with a smile. "I think I've heard my father speak of relatives in Maine, but I don't recollect where. Why do you ask?"

"My mother wrote me to find out. She's very much interested in people's relatives, Mr. Remsen, and so I thought I'd ask and let her know. You didn't mind my asking you, did you?"

"Certainly not. Tell your mother, March, that I hope those Remsens are some of my folks, because I should like to be related to her friends. And say, March, when you're

writing to your mother about me you needn't say anything about those explosions, need you?"

"I don't think it will be necessary, sir," laughed Joel.

"Very well; then just mention me as a dignified and reverend attorney-at-law, and we'll keep the rest a secret between us."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GOLF TOURNAMENT.

It was Saturday afternoon. The day was bright and sunny, and in the shelter of the grand stand on the campus, where the little east wind could not rustle, it was comfortably warm. The grass still held much of its summer verdancy, and the sky overhead was as deeply blue as on the mildest spring day. After a week of dull or stormy weather yesterday and to-day, with their fair skies, were as welcome as flowers in May, and gladness and light-heartedness were in the very air.

On the gridiron Westvale Grammar School and Hillton Academy were trying conclusions. On the grand stand all Hillton, academy and village, was assembled, and here and there a bright dress or wrap indicated the presence of a mother or sister in the throng. The Westvale team had arrived, accompanied by a coterie of enthusiastic supporters, armed with tin horns, maroon-colored banners, and mighty voices, which, with small hopes of winning on the field, were resolved to accomplish a notable victory of sound. On the side-line, with a dozen other substitutes whose greatest de-

sire was to be taken on the first eleven, sat Joel. Outfield West was sprawled beside him with his caddie bag clutched to his breast, and the two boys were discussing the game. West had arrived upon the scene but a moment before.

"We'll beat them by about a dozen points, I guess," Joel was prophesying. "They say the score was twenty to nothing last year, but Remsen declares the first isn't nearly as far advanced as it was this time last season. Just hear the racket those fellows are making! You ought to have seen Blair kick down the field a while ago. I thought the ball never would come down, and I guess Westvale thought so too. Their full-back nearly killed himself running backward, and finally caught it on their five-yard line, and had it down there. Then Greer walked through, lugging Andrews for a touch-down, after Westvale had tried three times to move the ball. There's the whistle; half's up. How is the golf getting along?"

"Somers and Whipple were at Look Off when I came away. I asked Billy Jones to come over and call me when they got to The Hill. I think Whipple will win by a couple of strokes. Somers is too nervous. I wish they'd hurry up. We'll not get through the last round before dark if they don't finish soon. You'll go round with me, won't you?"

"If the game's over. They're playing twenty-minute halves, you know; so I guess it will be. I hope Blair will let me on this half. Have you seen Cloud?"

"Yes; he's over on the seats. Who has his place?"

"Ned Post; and Clausen's playing at right. I'm glad that Blair is doing such good work to-day. I think he was rather cut up about getting beaten this morning."

"Yes; wasn't that hard luck? To think of his being downed by a cub of a junior! Though that same junior is going to be a fine player some day. He drives just grand. He had too much handicap, he did. Remsen didn't know anything about him, and allowed him ten. Here they come again."

The two elevens were trotting out on the field once more, and Joel stood up in the hope that Blair might see him and decide to take him on. But Joel was doomed to disappointment, for the second half of the game began with practically the same line-up. The score stood six to nothing in favor of Hillton. The playing had been decidedly ragged on both sides; and Remsen, as he left the team after administering a severe lecture, walked past with a slight frown on his face.

"Well, I guess I'll go over and see if I can hurry those chumps up some." West swung his bag over his shoulder and turned away. "When the game's done, hurry over, March. You'll find us somewhere on the course." Joel nodded, and West sauntered away toward the links. The second half of the game was similar to the first, save in that Remsen's scolding had accomplished an awakening, and the first put more snap into its playing. Six more points were scored from a touch-down by the Hillton right end, after a

thirty-yard run, followed by a difficult goal by Blair. But the Westvale rooters kept up their cheering bravely to the end, and took defeat with smiling faces and upraised voices; and long after the coach containing them had passed from sight their cheers could still be heard in the distance toward the station.

The bulk of the spectators turned at the conclusion of the match toward the links, and Joel followed in his football togs. At Home Hole he found Whipple and West preparing for the deciding round of the tournament, and the latter greeted him with a shout, and put his clubs into his keeping. Then Whipple went to the tee and led off with a long drive for the first hole, and the round began. West followed with a shorter shot and the march was taken up.

The links at Hillton consists of nine holes, five out and four in. The entire length of the course is a trifle over one and a half mile, and although the land is upland meadow and given to growing long grass, yet the course is generally conceded to be excellent. The holes are short, allowing the round to be accomplished by a capable player in thirty-two strokes. The course has thirteen bunkers of varying sizes, besides two water hazards at the inlet and outlet of the lake. The lake itself is spoiled as a hazard by the thick grove of trees on the side nearest the Academy. Sometimes a poor drive lands a ball in that same grove, and there is much trial and tribulation ere the player has succeeded in dislodging it from the underbrush.

While generally level, the course is diversified by slight elevations, upon which are the putting greens, their red and white flags visible from all parts of the links. As has been said, the holes are short, the longest, Lake Hole, being four hundred and ninety-six yards, and the shortest, the first, but one hundred and thirty-three. Outfield West once spent the better part of two weeks, at great cost to his class standing, in making a plan of the links, and, while it is not warranted accurate as to distances, it is reproduced here with his permission as giving a clearer idea of the ground than any verbal description.

Play had begun this morning at nine o'clock, and by noon only Somers, Whipple, and West had been left in the match. Blair had encountered defeat most unexpectedly at the hands of Greene, a junior, of whose prowess but little had been known by the handicapper; for, although Blair had done the round in three strokes less than his adversary's gross score, the latter's allowance of six strokes had placed him an easy winner. But Blair had been avenged later by West, who had defeated the youngster by three strokes in the net. In the afternoon Somers and Whipple had met, and, as West had predicted, the latter won by two strokes.

And now West and Whipple, both excellent players, and sworn enemies of the links, were fighting it out, and on this round depended the possession of the title of champion and the ownership for one year of the handicap cup, a modest

HILLTON STATION ½ M. S.
RAILROAD
E
N
S
W
ACADEMY H.
5
Railroad B.
4
Wheeler B.
DITCH H.
Masters B.
Half Way B.
3
END H.
HIGH H.
2
High B.
The Grove
The Lake
Track B.
MEADOW H.
6
Turner B.
Purgatory B.
1
SHORT H.
LAKE H.
8
Sandy B.
Hampton B.
Warren B.
7
LOOK OFF
Bridge
Bradley B.
The Hill
HOME H.
Rocky B.
The Beach
The Ledge
HUDSON R.
Q.W. dec.
=PLAN = OF=
HILLTON ACADEMY GOLF LINKS.
1 SHORT HOLE 133 Yds.
2 HIGH " 175 "
3 ACADEMY " 286 "
4 DITCH " 347 "
5 END " 461 "
6 MEADOW " 270 "
7 LOOK OFF " 301 "
8 LAKE " 496 "
9 HOME " 318 "
DRAWN FOR THE HAGUE BY CUTFIELD WEBB.

but highly prized pewter tankard. Medal Play rules governed to-day, and the scoring was by strokes.

Whipple reached the first green in one stroke, but used two more to hole-out. West took two short drives to reach a lie, from which he dropped his ball into the hole in one try. And the honors were even. The next hole was forty yards longer, and was played either in two short drives or one long drive and an approach shot. It contained two hazards, Track Bunker and High Bunker, the latter alone being formidable. Whipple led off with a long shot that went soaring up against the blue and then settled down as gently as a bird just a few yards in front of High Bunker. He had reversed his play of the last hole, and was now relying on his approach shot for position. West played a rather short drive off an iron which left his ball midway between the two bunkers. Whipple's next stroke took him neatly out of danger and on to the putting green, but West had fared not so well.

There was a great deal of noise from the younger boys who were looking on, much discussion of the methods of play, and much loud boasting of what some one else would have done under existing circumstances. West glanced up once and glared at one offending junior, and an admonitory "*Hush!*" was heard. But he was plainly disturbed, and when the little white sphere made its flight it went sadly aglee and dropped to earth far to the right of the green, and where rough and cuppy ground made exact putting well-nigh

impossible. Professor Beck promptly laid down a command of absolute silence during shots, and some of the smaller youths left the course in favor of another portion of the campus, where a boy's right to make all the noise he likes could not be disputed. But the harm was done, and when play for the third hole began the score was: Whipple 7, West 8.

Even to one of such intense ignorance of the science of golf as Joel March, there was a perceptible difference in the style of the two competitors. Outfield West was a great stickler for form, and imitated the full St. Andrews swing to the best of his ability. In addressing the ball he stood as squarely to it as was possible, without the use of a measuring tape, and drove off the right leg, as the expression is. Despite an almost exaggerated adherence to nicety of style, West's play had an ease and grace much envied by other golf disciples in the school, and his shots were nearly always successful.

Whipple's manner of driving was very different from his opponent's. His swing was short and often stopped too soon. His stance was rather awkward, after West's, and even his hold on the club was not according to established precedent. Yet, notwithstanding all this, it must be acknowledged that Whipple's drives had a way of carrying straight and far and landing well.

Joel followed the play with much interest if small appreciation of its intricacies, and carried West's bag, and

hoped all the time that that youth would win, knowing how greatly he had set his heart upon so doing.

There is no bunker between second and third holes, but the brook which supplies the lake runs across the course and is about six yards wide from bank to bank. But it has no terrors for a long drive, and both the players went safely over and won Academy Hole in three strokes. West still held the odd. Two long strokes carried Whipple a scant distance from Railroad Bunker, which fronts Ditch Hole, a dangerous lie, since Railroad Bunker is high and the putting green is on an elevation, almost meriting the title of hill, directly back of it. But if Whipple erred in judgment or skill, West found himself in even a sorrier plight when two more strokes had been laid to his score. His first drive with a brassie had fallen rather short, and for the second he had chosen an iron. The ball sailed off on a long flight that brought words of delight from the spectators, but which caused Joel to look glum and West to grind the turf under his heel in anger. For, like a thing possessed, that ball fell straight into the very middle of the bunker, and when it was found lay up to its middle in gravel.

West groaned as he lifted the ball, replaced it loosely in its cup, and carefully selected a club. Whipple meanwhile cleared the bunker in the best of style, and landed on the green in a good position to hole out in two shots. "Great Gobble!" muttered West as he swung his club, and fixed his eye on a point an inch and a half back of the imbedded

ball, "if I don't get this out of here on this shot, I'm a gone goose!" March grinned sympathetically but anxiously, and the onlookers held their breath. Then back went the club—there was a scattering of sand and gravel, and the ball dropped dead on the green, four yards from the hole.

"Excellent!" shouted Professor Beck, and Joel jumped in the air from sheer delight. "Good for you, Out!" yelled Dave Somers; and the rest of the watchers echoed the sentiment in various ways, even those who desired to see Whipple triumphant yielding their meed of praise for the performance. And, "I guess, Out," said Whipple ruefully, "you might as well take the cup." But Outfield West only smiled silently in response, and followed his ball with businesslike attention to the game.

Whipple was weak on putting, and his first stroke with an iron failed to carry his ball to the hole. West, on the contrary, was a sure player on the green, and now with his ball but four yards from the hole he had just the opportunity he desired to better his score. The green was level and clean, and West selected a small iron putter, and addressed the ball with all the attention to form that the oldest St. Andrews veteran might desire. Playing on the principle that it is better to go too far than not far enough, since the hole is larger than the ball, West gave a long stroke, and the gutta-percha disappeared from view. Whipple holed out on his next try, adopting a wooden putter this time, and the score stood fifteen strokes each.

The honor was West's, and he led off for End Hole with a beautiful brassie drive that cleared the first two bunkers with room to spare. Whipple, for the first time in the round, drove poorly, toeing his ball badly, and dropping it almost off of the course and just short of the second bunker. West's second drive was a loft over Halfway Bunker that fell fairly on the green and rolled within ten feet of the hole. From there, on the next shot, he holed out very neatly in eighteen. Whipple meanwhile had redeemed himself with a high lofting stroke that carried past the threatening dangers of Masters Bunker and back on to the course within a few yards of West's lie. But again skill on the putting green was wanting, and he required two strokes to make the hole. Once more the honor was West's, and that youth turned toward home with a short and high stroke. The subsequent hole left the score "the like" at 22, and the seventh gave Whipple, 25, West 26.

"But here's where Mr. West takes the lead," confided that young gentleman to Joel as they walked to the teeing ground. "From here to Lake Hole is four hundred and ninety-six yards, and I'm going to do it in three shots on to the green. You watch!"

Four hundred and ninety-odd yards is nothing out of the ordinary for an older player, but to a lad of seventeen it is a creditable distance to do in three drives. Yet that is what West did it in; and strange to relate, and greatly to that young gentleman's surprise, Whipple duplicated the perform-

ance, and amid the excited whispers of the onlookers the two youths holed out on their next strokes; and the score still gave the odd to West—29 to 30.

"I didn't think he could do it," whispered West to Joel, "and that makes it look bad for your uncle Out. But never mind, my lad, there's still Rocky Bunker ahead of us, and——" West did not complete his remark, but his face took on a very determined look as he teed his ball. The last hole was in sight, and victory hovered overhead.

Now, the distance from Lake Hole to the Home Hole is but a few yards over three hundred, and it can be accomplished comfortably in two long brassie drives. Midway lies The Hill, a small elevation rising from about the middle of the course to the river bluff, and there falling off sheer to the beach below. It is perhaps thirty yards across, and if the ball reaches it safely it forms an excellent place from which to make the second drive. So both boys tried for The Hill. Whipple landed at the foot of it, while West came plump upon the side some five yards from the summit, and his next drive took him cleanly over Rocky Bunker and to the right of the Home Green. But Whipple summoned discretion to his aid, and instead of trying to make the green on the next drive, played short, and landed far to the right of the Bunker. This necessitated a short approach, and by the time he had gained the green and was "made" within holing distance of the flag, the score was once more even, and the end was in sight.

And now the watchers moved about restlessly, and Joel found his heart in his throat. But West gripped his wooden putter firmly and studied the situation. It was quite possible for a skillful player to hole out on the next stroke from Whipple's lie. West, on the contrary, was too far distant to possess more than one chance in ten of winning the hole in one play. Whether to take that one chance or to use his next play in bettering his lie was the question. Whipple, West knew, was weak on putting, but it is ever risky to rely on your opponent's weakness. While West pondered, Whipple studied the lay of the green with eyes that strove to show no triumph, and the little throng kept silence save for an occasional nervous whisper.

Then West leaned down and cleared a pebble from before his ball. It was the veriest atom of a pebble that ever showed on a putting green, but West was willing to take no chances beyond those that already confronted him. His mind was made up. Gripping his iron putter firmly rather low on the shaft and bending far over, West slowly, cautiously swung the club above the gutty, glancing once and only once as he did so at the distant goal. Then there was a pause. Whipple no longer studied his own play; his eyes were on that other sphere that nestled there so innocently against the grass. Joel leaned breathlessly forward. Professor Beck muttered under his breath, and then cried "S—sh!" to himself in an angry whisper. And then West's club swung back gently, easily, paused an instant—and—

Forward sped the ball—on and on—slower—slower—but straight as an arrow—and then—Presto! it was gone from sight!

A moment of silence followed ere the applause broke out, and in that moment Professor Beck announced:

"The odd to Whipple. Thirty-two to thirty-three."

Then the group became silent again. Whipple addressed his ball. It was yet possible to tie the score. His face was pale, and for the first time during the tournament he felt nervous. A better player could scarce have missed the hole from Whipple's lie, but for once that youth's nerve forsook him and he hit too short; the ball stopped a foot from the hole. The game was decided. Professor Beck again announced the score:

"The two more to Whipple. Thirty-two to thirty-four."

Again Whipple addressed his ball, and this time, but too late to win the victory, the tiny sphere dropped neatly into the hole, and the throng broke silence. And as West and Whipple, victor and vanquished, shook hands over the Home Hole, Professor Beck announced:

"Thirty-two to thirty-five. West wins the Cup!"

CHAPTER IX.

AN EVENING CALL.

The last week of October brought chilling winds and flying clouds. Life at Hillton Academy had gone on serenely since West's victory on the links. The little pewter tankard reposed proudly upon his mantel beside a bottle of chow-chow, and bore his name as the third winner of the trophy. But West had laid aside his clubs, save for an occasional hour at noon, and, abiding by his promise to Joel, he had taken up his books again with much resolution, if little ardor. Hillton had met and defeated two more football teams, and the first eleven was growing gradually stronger. Remsen was seen to smile now quite frequently during practice, and there was a general air of prosperity about the gridiron.

The first had gone to its training table at "Mother" Burke's, in the village, and the second ate its meals in the center of the school dining hall with an illy concealed sense of self-importance. And the grinds sneered at its appetites, and the obscure juniors admired reverently from afar. Joel had attended both recitations and practice with exemplary and impartial regularity, and as a result his class standing

was growing better and better on one hand, and on the other his muscles were becoming stronger, his flesh firmer, and his brain clearer.

The friendship between him and Outfield West had ripened steadily, until now they were scarcely separable. And that they might be more together West had lately made a proposition.

"That fellow Sproule is a regular cad, Joel, and I tell you what we'll do. After Christmas you move over to Hampton and room with me. You have to make an application before recess, you know. What do you say?"

"I should like to first rate, but I can't pay the rent there," Joel had objected.

"Then pay the same as you're paying for your den in Masters," replied West. "You see, Joel, I have to pay the rent for Number 2 Hampton anyhow, and it won't make any difference whether I have another fellow in with me or not. Only, if you pay as much of my rent as you're paying now, why, that will make it so much cheaper for me. Don't you see?"

"Yes, but if I use half the room I ought to pay half the rent." And to this Joel stood firm until West's constant entreaties led to a compromise. West was to put the matter before his father, and Joel before his. If their parents sanctioned it, Joel was to apply for the change of abode. As yet the matter was still in abeyance.

Richard Sproule, as West had suggested rather more for-

cibly than politely, was becoming more and more objectionable, and Joel was not a bit grieved at the prospect of leaving him. Of late, intercourse between the roommates had become reduced to rare monosyllables. This was the outcome of a refusal on Joel's part to give a portion of his precious study time to helping Sproule with his lessons. Once or twice Joel had consented to assist his roommate, and had done so to the detriment of his own affairs; but the result to both had proved so unsatisfactory that Joel had stoutly refused the next request. Thereupon Sproule had considered himself deeply aggrieved, and usually spent the time when Joel was present in sulking.

Bartlett Cloud, since his encounter with Joel on the field the afternoon that he was put off the team, had had nothing to say to him, though his looks when they met were always dark and threatening. But in a school as large as Hillton there is plenty of room to avoid an objectionable acquaintance, so long as you are not under the same roof with him, and consequently Cloud and Joel seldom met. The latter constantly regretted having made an enemy of the other, but beyond this regret his consideration of Cloud seldom went.

So far Joel had not found an opportunity to accept the invitation that Remsen had extended to him, though that invitation had since been once or twice repeated. But tonight West and he had made arrangement to visit Remsen at his room, and had obtained permission from Professor

Wheeler to do so. The two boys met at the gymnasium after supper was over and took their way toward the village. West had armed himself with a formidable stick, in the hope, loudly expressed at intervals, that they would be set upon by tramps. But Remsen's lodgings were reached without adventure, and the lads were straightway admitted to a cosey study, wherein, before an open fire, sat Remsen and a guest. After a cordial welcome from Remsen the guest was introduced as Albert Digbee.

"Yes, we know each other," said West, as he shook hands. "We both room in Hampton, but Digbee's a grind, you know, and doesn't care to waste his time on us idlers." Digbee smiled.

"It isn't inclination, West; I don't have the time, and so don't attempt to keep up with you fellows." He shook Joel's hand. "I'm glad to meet you. I've heard of you before."

Then the quartet drew chairs up to the blaze, and, as Remsen talked, Joel examined his new acquaintance.

Digbee was a year older than West and Joel. He was in the senior class, and was spoken of as one of the smartest boys in the school. Although a Hampton House resident, he seldom was seen with the others save at the table, and was usually referred to among themselves as "Dig," both because that suggested his Christian name and because, as they said, he was forever digging at his books. In appearance Albert Digbee was a tall, slender, but scarcely frail youth, with a

cleanly cut face that looked, in the firelight, far too pale. His eyes were strikingly bright, and though his smiles were infrequent, his habitual expression was one of eager and kindly interest. Joel had often come across him in class, and had long wanted to know him.

"You see, boys," Remsen was saying, "Digbee here is of the opinion that athletics in general and football in particular are harmful to schools and colleges as tending to draw the attention of pupils from their studies, and I maintain the opposite. Now, what's your opinion, West? Digbee and I have gone over it so often that we would like to hear some one else on the subject."

"Oh, I don't know," replied West. "If fellows would give up football and go in for golf, there wouldn't be any talk about athletics being hurtful. Golf's a game that a chap can play and get through with and have some time for study. You don't have to train a month to play for an hour; it's a sport that hasn't become a business."

"I can testify," said Joel gravely, "that Out is a case in point. He plays golf, and has time left to study—how to play more golf."

"Well, anyhow, you know I *do* study some lately, Joel," laughed West. Joel nodded with serious mien.

"I think you've made a very excellent point in favor of golf, West," said Digbee. "It hasn't been made a business, at least in this school. But won't it eventually become quite as much of a pursuit as football now is?"

"Oh, it may become as popular, but, don't you see, it will never become as—er—exacting on the fellows that play it. You can play golf without having to go into training for it."

"Nevertheless, West," replied the head coach, "if a fellow can play golf without being in training, doesn't it stand to reason that the same fellow can play a better game if he is in training? That is, won't he play a better game if he is in better trim?"

"Yes, I guess so, but he will play a first-class game if he doesn't train."

"But not as good a game as he will if he does train?"

"I suppose not," admitted West.

"Well, now, a fellow can play a very good game of football if he isn't in training," continued Remsen, "but that same fellow, if he goes to bed and gets up at regular hours, and eats decent food at decent times, and takes care of himself in such a way as to improve his mental, moral, and physical person, will play a still better game and derive more benefit from it. When golf gets a firmer hold on this side of the Atlantic, schools and colleges will have their golf teams of, say, from two to a dozen players. Of course, the team will not play as a team, but the members of it will play singly or in couples against representatives of other schools. And when that happens it is sure to follow that the players will go into almost as strict training as the football men do now."

"Well, that sounds funny," exclaimed West.

"Digbee thinks one of the most objectionable features of football is the fact that the players go into it so thoroughly—that they train for it, and study it, and spend a good deal of valuable time thinking about it. But to me that is one of its most admirable features. When a boy or a man goes in for athletics, whether football or rowing or hockey, he desires, if he is a real flesh-and-blood being, to excel in it. To do that it is necessary that he put himself in the condition that will allow of his doing his very best. And to that end he trains. He gives up pastry, and takes to cereals; he abandons his cigarettes and takes to fresh air; he gives up late hours at night, and substitutes early hours in the morning. And he is better for doing so. He feels better, looks better, works better, plays better."

"But," responded Digbee, "can a boy who has come to school to study, and who has to study to make his schooling pay for itself, can such a boy afford the time that all that training and practicing requires?"

"Usually, yes," answered Remsen. "Of course, there are boys, and men too, for that matter, who are incapable of occupying their minds with two distinct interests. That kind should leave athletics alone. And there are others who are naturally—I guess I mean *un*naturally—stupid, and who, should they attempt to sandwich football or baseball into their school life, would simply make a mess of both study and recreation. But they need not enter into the question

of the harm or benefit of athletics, since at every well-conducted school or college those boys are not allowed to take up with athletics. Yes, generally speaking, the boy who comes to school to study can afford to play football, train for football, and think football, because instead of interfering with his studies it really helps him with them. It makes him healthy, strong, wide-awake, self-reliant, and clear-headed. Some time I shall be glad to show you a whole stack of careful statistics which prove that football men, at least, rather than being backward with studies, are nearly always above the average in class standing. March, you're a hard-worked football enthusiast, and I understand that you're keeping well up with your lessons. Do you have trouble to attend to both? Do you have to skimp your studies? I know you give full attention to the pigskin."

"I'm hard put some days to find time for everything," answered Joel, "but I always manage to make it somehow, and I have all the sleep I want or need. Perhaps if I gave up football I might get higher marks in recitations, but I'd not feel so well, and it's possible that I'd only get lower marks. I agree with you, Mr. Remsen, that athletics, or at least football, is far more likely to benefit a chap than to hurt him, because a fellow can't study well unless he is in good health and spirits."

"Are you convinced, Digbee?" asked Remsen. Digbee shook his head smilingly.

"I don't believe I am, quite. But you know more about

such things than I do. In fact, it's cheeky for me to argue about them. Why, I've never played anything but tennis, and never did even that well."

"You know the ground you argue from, and because I have overwhelmed you with talk it does not necessarily follow that I am right," responded his host courteously. "But enough of such dull themes. There's West most asleep.—March, have you heard from your mother lately?"

"Yes, I received a letter from her yesterday morning. She writes that she's glad the relationship is settled finally; says she's certain that any kin of the Maine Remsens is a person of good, strong moral character." When the laugh had subsided, Remsen turned to West.

"Have you ever heard of Tommy Collingwood?"

"Wasn't he baseball captain a good many years ago?"

"Yes, and used to row in the boat. Well, Tommy was a good deal better at spinning top on Academy steps than doing lessons, and a deal fonder of playing shinney than writing letters. But Tommy's mother always insisted that Tommy should write home once a week, and Tommy's father wrote and explained what would happen to Tommy if he didn't obey his mother; and as Tommy's folks lived just over in Albany it was a small thing for Tommy's father to run over some day with a strap; so Tommy obeyed his parents and every week wrote home. His letters weren't long, nor were they filled with a wealth of detail, but they answered the purpose in lieu of better. Each one ran: 'Hillton Acad-

emy, Hillton, N. Y.,' with the date. 'Dear Father and Mother, I am well and studying hard. Your loving son, Thomas Collingwood.'

"Well, when Christmas recess came, Tommy went home. And one day his mother complimented Tommy on the regularity of his correspondence. Tommy looked sheepish. 'To tell the truth, mother, I didn't write one of those letters each week,' explained Tommy. 'But just after school opened I was sick for a week, and didn't have anything to do; so I wrote 'I am well' twelve times, and dated each ahead.'"

Digbee accompanied the other two lads back to the yard, and he and March discussed studies, while West mooned along, whistling half aloud and thrashing the weeds and rocks with his cudgel, for the tramps refused to appear on the scene. He and Digbee went out of their way to see Joel safely to his dormitory, and then Joel accompanied them on their homeward way as far as Academy Building. There good-nights were said, and Joel, feeling but little inclined for sleep, drew his collar up and strolled to the front of the building, where, from the high steps, the river was visible for several miles in either direction. The moon was struggling out from a mass of somber clouds overhead, and the sound of the waters as they swirled around the rocky point was plainly heard.

Joel sat there on the steps, under the shadow of the dark building, thinking of many things, and feeling very happy

and peaceful, until a long, shrill sound from the north told of the coming of the 9.48 train; then he made his way back to Masters, up the dim stairs, and into his room, where Dickey Sproule lay huddled in bed reading The Three Guardsmen by the screened light of a guttering candle.

CHAPTER X.

THE BROKEN BELL ROPE.

Joel arrived at chapel the following morning just as the doors were being closed. Duffy, the wooden-legged doorkeeper, was not on duty, and the youth upon whom his duties had devolved allowed Joel to pass without giving his name for report as tardy. During prayers there was an evident atmosphere of suppressed excitement among the pupils, but not until chapel was over did Joel discover the cause.

"Were you here when it happened?" asked West.

"When what happened?" responded Joel.

"Haven't you heard? Why, some one cut the bell rope, and when 'Peg-leg' went to ring chapel bell the rope broke up in the tower and came down on his head and laid him out there on the floor, and some of the fellows found him knocked senseless. And they've taken him to the infirmary. You know the rope's as big as your wrist, and it hit him on top of the head. I guess he isn't much hurt, but 'Wheels' is as mad as never was, and whoever did it will have a hard time, I'll bet!"

"Poor old Duffy!" said Joel. "Let's go over and find out if he's much hurt. It was a dirty sort of a joke to play, though I suppose whoever did it didn't think it would hurt any one."

At the infirmary they found Professor Gibbs in the office.

"No, boys, he isn't damaged much. He'll be all right in a few hours. I hope that the ones who did it will be severely punished. It was a most contemptible trick to put up on Duffy."

"I hope so too," answered West indignantly. "You may depend that no upper middle boy did it, sir." The professor smiled.

"I hope you are right, West."

At noon hour Joel was summoned to the principal's office. Professor Wheeler, the secretary, and Professor Durkee were present, and as Joel entered he scented an air of hostility. The secretary closed the door behind him.

"March, I have sent for you to ask whether you can give us any information which will lead to the apprehension of the perpetrators of the trick which has resulted in injury to Mr. Duffy. Can you?"

"No, sir," responded Joel.

"You know absolutely nothing about it?"

"Nothing, sir, except what I have been told."

"By whom?"

"Outfield West, sir, after chapel. We went to the in-

firmary to inquire about 'Peg'—about Mr. Duffy, sir." The secretary repressed a smile. The principal was observing Joel very closely, and Professor Durkee moved impatiently in his seat.

"I can not suppose," continued the principal, "that the thing was done simply as a school joke. The boy who cut the rope must have known when he did so that the result would be harmful to whoever rang the chapel bell this morning. I wish it understood that I have no intention of dealing leniently with the culprit, but, at the same time, a confession, if made now, will have the effect of mitigating his punishment." He paused. Joel turned an astonished look from him to Professor Durkee, who, meeting it, frowned and turned impatiently away. "You have nothing more to tell me, March?"

"Why, no, sir," answered Joel in a troubled voice. "I don't understand. Am I suspected—of—of this—thing, sir?"

"Dear me, sir," exclaimed Professor Durkee, explosively, turning to the principal, "it's quite evident that——"

"One moment, please," answered the latter firmly. The other subsided.—"You had town leave last night, March?"

"Yes, sir."

"You went with Outfield West?"

"Yes, sir."

"What time did you return to your room?"

"At about a quarter to ten, sir."

"You are certain as to the time?"

"I only know that I heard the down train whistle as I left Academy Building. I went right to my room, sir."

"Was the door of Academy Building unlocked last night?"

"I don't know. I didn't try it, sir."

"What time did you leave Mr. Remsen's house?"

"A few minutes after nine."

"You came right back here?"

"Yes, sir. We came as far as Academy Building, and West and Digbee went home. I sat on the front steps here until I heard the whistle blow. Then I went to my room."

"Why did you sit on the steps, March?"

"I wasn't sleepy; and the moon was coming out—and—I wanted to think."

"Do you hear from home very often?"

"Once or twice a week, sir."

"When did you get a letter last, and from whom was it?"

"From my mother, about three days ago."

"Have you that letter?"

"Yes, sir. It is in my room."

"You sometimes carry your letters in your pocket?"

"Why, yes, but not often. If I receive them on the way out of the building I put them in my pocket, and then put them away when I get back."

"Where do you keep them?"

"In my bureau drawer."

"It is kept locked?"

"No, sir. I never lock it."

"Do you remember what was in that last letter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was any one mentioned in it?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Remsen was mentioned. And Outfield West, and my brother, and father."

"Is this your letter?" Professor Wheeler extended it across the desk, and Joel took it wonderingly.

"Why, yes, sir. But where—I don't understand——!" Again he looked toward Professor Durkee in bewilderment.

"Nor do I," answered that gentleman dryly.

"March," continued the principal, as he took the letter again, "this was found this morning, after the accident, on the floor of the bell tower. Do you know how it came there?" Joel's cheeks reddened and then grew white as the full meaning of the words reached him. His voice suddenly grew husky.

"No, sir, I do not." The words were spoken very stoutly and rang with sincerity. A silence fell on the room. Professor Wheeler glanced inquiringly at Professor Durkee, and the latter made a grimace of impatience that snarled his homely face into a mass of wrinkles.

"Look here, boy," he snapped, "who do you think dropped that letter there?"

"I can't think, sir. I can't understand it at all. I've never been in the tower since I've been in school."

"Do you know of any one who might like to get you into trouble in such a way as this?"

"No, sir," answered Joel promptly. Then a sudden recollection of Bartlett Cloud came to him, and he hesitated. Professor Durkee observed it.

"Well?" he said sharply.

"I know of no one, sir."

"Humph!" grunted the professor, "you do, but you won't say."

"If you suspect any one it will be best to tell us, March," said Professor Wheeler, more kindly. "You must see that the evidence is much against you, and, while I myself can not believe that you are guilty, I shall be obliged to consider you so until proof of your innocence is forthcoming. Have you any enemy in school?"

"I think not, sir."

The door opened and Remsen appeared.

"Good-morning," he said. "You wished to see me, professor?"

"Yes, in a moment. Sit down, please, Remsen." Remsen nodded to Joel and the secretary, shook hands with Professor Durkee, and took a chair. The principal turned again to Joel.

"You wish me to understand, then, that you have no explanation to offer as to how the letter came to be in the bell tower? Recollect that shielding a friend or any other pupil will do neither you nor him any service."

Joel was hesitating. Was it right to throw suspicion on Bartlett Cloud by mentioning the small occurrence on the football field so long before? It was inconceivable that Cloud would go to such a length in mere spite. And yet— Remsen interrupted his thoughts.

"Professor, if you will dismiss March for a while, perhaps I can throw some light on the matter. Let him return in half an hour or so." Professor Wheeler nodded.

"Come back at one o'clock, March," he said.

Outside Joel hesitated where to go. He must tell some one his trouble, and there was only one who would really care. He turned toward Hampton House, then remembered that it was dinner hour and that Outfield would be at table. He had forgotten his own dinner until that moment. In the dining hall West was still lingering over his dessert. Joel took his seat at the training table, explaining his absence by saying that he had been called to the office, and hurried through a dinner of beef and rice and milk. When West arose Joel overtook him at the door. And as the friends took their way toward Joel's room, he told everything to West in words that tumbled over each other.

Outfield West heard him in silence after one exclamation of surprise, and when Joel had finished, cried:

"Why didn't you tell about Cloud? Don't you see that this is his doing? That he is getting even with you for his losing the football team?"

"I thought of that, Out, but it seemed too silly to sup

pose that he would do such a thing just for—for that, you know."

"Well, you may be certain that he did do it; or, at least, if he didn't cut the rope himself, found some one to do it for him. It's just the kind of a revenge that a fellow of his meanness would think of. He won't stand up and fight like a man. Here, let's go and find him!"

"No, wait. I'll tell Professor Wheeler about him when I go back; then if he thinks— If he did do it, Out, I'll lick him good for it!"

"Hooray! And when you get through I'll take a hand, too. But what do you suppose Remsen was going to tell?"

Joel shook his head. They found Sproule in the room, and to him West spoke as follows:

"Hello, Dickey! You're not studying? It's not good for you; these sudden changes should be avoided." Sproule laughed, but looked annoyed at the banter. "Joel and I have come up for a chat, Dickey," continued West. "Now, you take your Robinson Crusoe and read somewhere else for a while, like a nice boy."

Sproule grew red-faced, and turned to West angrily.

"Don't you see I'm studying? If you and March want to talk, why, either go somewhere else, or talk here."

"But our talk is private, Dickey, and not intended for little boys' ears. You know the saying about little pitchers, Dickey?"

"Well, I'm not going out, so you can talk or not as you like."

"Oh, yes, you are going out, Dickey. Politeness requires it, and I shall see that you maintain that delightful courteousness for which you are noted. Now, Dickey!" West indicated the door with a nod and a smile. Sproule bent his head over his book and growled a response that sounded anything but polite. Then West, still smiling, seized the unobliging youth by the shoulders, pinioning his arms to his sides, and pushed him away from the table and toward the door. Joel rescued the lamp at a critical moment, the chairs went over on to the floor, and a minute later Sproule was on the farther side of the bolted door, and West was adjusting his rumpled attire.

"I'll report you for this, Outfield West!" howled Sproule through the door, in a passion of resentment.

"Report away," answered West mockingly.

"And if I miss my Latin I'll tell why, too!"

"Well, you'll miss it all right enough, unless you've changed mightily. But, here, I'll shy your book through the transom."

This was done, and the sound of ascending feet on the stairway reaching Sproule's ears at that moment, he grabbed his book and took himself off, muttering vengeance.

"Have you looked?" asked West.

"Yes; it's not there. But there are no others missing. Who could have taken it?"

"Any one, my boy; Bartlett Cloud, for preference. Your door is unlocked, he comes in when he knows you are out, looks on the table, sees nothing there that will serve, goes to the bureau, opens the top drawer, and finds a pile of letters. He takes the first one, which is, of course, the last received, and sneaks out. Then he climbs into the bell tower at night, cuts the rope through all but one small strand, and puts your letter on the floor where it will be found in the morning. Isn't that plain enough?" Joel nodded forlornly. "But cheer up, Joel. Your Uncle Out will see your innocence established, firmly and beyond all question. And now come on. It's one o'clock, and you've got to go back to the office, while I've got a class. Come over to my room at four, Joel, and tell me what happens."

Remsen and the secretary were no longer in the office when Joel returned. Professor Durkee was standing with his hat in his hand, apparently about to leave.

"March," began the principal, "Mr. Remsen tells us that you were struck at by Bartlett Cloud on the football field one day at practice. Is that so?" Joel replied affirmatively.

"Does he speak to you, or you to him?"

"No, sir; but then I've never been acquainted with him."

"Do you believe that he could have stolen that letter from your room?"

"I know that he could have done so, sir, but I don't like to think——"

"That he did? Well, possibly he did and possibly he didn't. I shall endeavor to find out. Meanwhile I must ask you to let this go no further. You will go on as though this conversation had never occurred. If I find that you are unjustly suspected I will summon you and ask your pardon, and the guilty one will be punished. Professor Durkee here has pointed out to me that such conduct is totally foreign to his conception of your character, and has reminded me that your standing in class has been of the best since the beginning of the term. I agree with him in all this, but duty in the affair is very plain and I have been performing it, unpleasant as it is. You may go now, March; and kindly remember that this affair must be kept quiet."

Joel turned with a surprised but grateful look toward Professor Durkee, but was met with a wrathful scowl. Joel hurried to his recitation, and later, before West's fireplace, the friends discussed the unfortunate affair in all its phases, and resolved, with vehemence, to know the truth sooner or later.

But Joel's cup was not yet filled. When he returned to the dormitory after supper, he found two missives awaiting him. The first was from Wesley Blair:

"DEAR MARCH" (it read): "Please show up in the morning at Burke's for breakfast with the first eleven. You are to take the place of Post at L. H. B. It will be necessary for you to report at the gym at eleven each day for noon signals;

please arrange your recitations to this end. I am writing this because I couldn't see you this afternoon; hope you are all right. Yours, WESLEY BLAIR."

Joel read this with a loudly beating heart and flushing cheeks. It was as unexpected as it was welcome, that news; he *had* hoped for an occasional chance to substitute Post or Blair or Clausen on the first team in some minor game, but to be taken on as a member was more than he had even thought of since he had found how very far from perfect was his playing. He seized his cap with the intention of racing across to Hampton and informing West of his luck; then he remembered the other note. It was from the office, and it was with a sinking heart that he tore it open and read:

"You are placed upon probation until further notice from the Faculty. The rules and regulations require that pupils on probation abstain from all sports and keep their rooms in the evenings except upon permission from the Principal. Respectfully, CURTIS GORDON, *Secretary*."

CHAPTER XI.

TWO HEROES.

One afternoon a week later Outfield West and Joel March were seated on the ledge where, nearly two months before, they had begun their friendship. The sun beat warmly down and the hill at their backs kept off the east wind. Below them the river was brightly blue, and a skiff dipping its way up stream caught the sunlight on sail and hull until, as it danced from sight around the headland, it looked like a white gull hovering over the water. Above, on the campus, the football field was noisy with voices and the pipe of the referee's whistle; and farther up the river at the boathouse moving figures showed that some of the boys were about to take advantage of the pleasant afternoon.

"Some one's going rowing," observed Outfield. "Can you row, Joel?"

"I guess so; I never tried." West laughed.

"Then I guess you can't. I've tried. It's like trying to write with both hands. While you're looking after one the other has fits and runs all over the paper. If you pull with the left oar the right oar goes up in the air or tries to

throw you out of the boat by getting caught in the water. Paddling suits me better. Say, you'll see a bully race next spring when we meet Eustace. Last spring they walked away from us. But the crew is to have a new boat next year. Look! those two fellows row well, don't they? Remsen says a chap can never learn to row unless he has been born near the water. That lets me out. In Iowa we haven't any water nearer than the Mississippi—except the Red Cedar, and that doesn't count. By the way, Joel, what did Remsen say to you last night about playing again?"

"He said to keep in condition, so that in case I got off probation I could go right back to work. He says he'll do all he can to help me, and I know he will. But it won't do any good. 'Wheels' won't let me play until he's found out who did that trick. It's bad enough, Out, to be blamed for the thing when I didn't do it, but to lose the football team like this is a hundred times worse. I almost wish I *had* cut that old rope!" continued Joel savagely; "then I'd at least have the satisfaction of knowing that I was only getting what I deserved." West looked properly sympathetic.

"It's a beastly shame, that's what I think. What's the good of 'believing you innocent,' as 'Wheels' says, if he goes ahead and punishes you for the affair? What? Why, there isn't any, of course! If it was me I'd cut the pesky rope every chance I got until they let up on me!" Joel smiled despite his ill humor.

"And I've lost half my interest in lessons, Out. I try not to, but I can't help it. I guess my chance at the scholarship is gone higher than a kite."

"Oh, hang the scholarship!" exclaimed West. "But there's the St. Eustace game in three weeks. If you don't play in that, Joel, I'll go to 'Wheels' and tell him what I think about it!"

"It's awfully rough on a fellow, Out, but Professor Wheeler is only doing what is right, I suppose. He can't let the thing go unnoticed, you see, and as long as I can't prove my innocence I guess he's right to hold me to blame for it."

"Tommyrot!" answered West explosively. "The faculty's just trying to have us beaten! Why— Say, don't tell a soul, Joel, but Blair's worried half crazy. They had him up yesterday, and 'Wheels' told him that if he didn't get better marks from now on he couldn't play. What do you think of that? They're not *decent* about it. They're trying to put us *all* on probation. Why, how do I know but what they'll put *me* on?"

Outfield hit his shoe violently with the driver he held until it hurt him. For although Joel was debarred from playing golf there was nothing to keep him from watching West play, and this afternoon the two had been half over the course together, West explaining the game, and Joel listening intently, and all the while longing to take a club in hand and have a whack at the ball himself.

"That's bad," answered Joel thoughtfully. "It would be all up with us if Blair shouldn't play."

"And that's just what's going to happen if 'Wheels' keeps up his present game," responded Outfield. "Who are those chaps in that shell, Joel? One looks like Cloud, the fellow in front." Joel watched the approaching craft for a moment.

"It is Cloud," he answered. "And that looks like Clausen with him. Why isn't he practicing, I wonder?"

"Haven't you heard? He was dropped from the team yesterday. Wills has his place. Post says, by the way, that he's sorry you're in such a fix, but he's mighty glad to get back on the first. He's an awfully decent chap, is Post. Did you see that thing he has in this month's Hilltonian about Cooke? Says the Fac's going to establish a class in bakery and put Cooke in as teacher because he's such a fine *loafer!* Say, what's the matter down there?"

The shell containing Cloud and Clausen had reached a point almost opposite to where West and Joel were perched, and as the latter looked toward it at West's exclamation he saw Cloud throw aside his oars and stand upright in the boat. Clausen had turned and was looking at his friend, but still held his oars.

"By Jove, Joel, she's sinking!" cried Outfield. "Look! Why doesn't Clausen get out? There goes Cloud over. I wonder if Clausen can swim? Come on!"

And half tumbling, half climbing, West sped down the

bank on to the tiny strip of rocks and gravel that lay along the water. Joel followed. Cloud now was in the water at a little distance from the shell, which had settled to the gunwales. Clausen, plainly in a state of terror, was kneeling in the sinking boat and crying to the other lad for help. The next moment he was in the water, and his shouts reached the two lads on the beach. Cloud swam toward him, but before he could reach him Clausen had gone from sight.

"What shall we do?" cried West. "He's drowning! Can you swim?" For Joel had already divested himself of his coat and vest, and was cutting the lacings of his shoes. West hesitated an instant only, then followed suit.

"Yes." Off went the last shoe, and Joel ran into the water. West, pale of face, but with a determined look in his blue eyes, followed a moment later, a yard or two behind, and the two set out with desperate strokes to reach the scene of the disaster. As he had taken the water Joel had cast a hurried glance toward the spot where Clausen had sunk, and had seen nothing of that youth; only Cloud was in sight, and he seemed to be swimming hurriedly toward shore.

Joel went at the task hand over hand and heard behind him West, laboring greatly at his swimming. Presently Joel heard his name cried in an exhausted voice.

"I—can't make—it—Joel!" shouted West. "I'll—have to—turn—back."

"All right," Joel called. "Go up to the field and send

some one for help." Then he turned his attention again to his strokes, and raising his head once, saw an open river before him with nothing in sight between him and the opposite bank save, farther down stream, a floating oar. He had made some allowance for the current, and when in another moment he had reached what seemed to him to be near the scene of the catastrophe, yet a little farther down stream, he trod water and looked about. Under the bluff to the right Cloud was crawling from the river. West was gone from sight. About him ran the stream, and save for its noise no sound came to him, and nothing rewarded his eager, searching gaze save a branch that floated slowly by. With despair at his heart, he threw up his arms and sank with wide-open eyes, peering about him in the hazy depths. Above him the surface water bubbled and eddied; below him was darkness; around him was only green twilight. For a moment he tarried there, and then arose to the surface and dashed the water from his eyes and face. And suddenly, some thirty feet away, an arm clad in a white sweater sleeve came slowly into sight.

With a frantic leap through the water Joel sped toward it. A bare head followed the upstretched arm; two wild, terror-stricken eyes opened and looked despairingly at the peaceful blue heavens; the white lips moved, but no sound came from them. And then, just as the eyes closed and just as the body began to sink, as slowly as it had arisen, and for the last time, Joel reached it.

There was no time left in which to pause and select a hold of the drowning boy, and Joel caught savagely at his arm and struck toward the bank, and the inert body came to the surface like a water-logged plank.

"Clausen!" shouted Joel. "Clausen! Can you hear? Brace up! Strike out with your right hand, and don't grab me! Do you hear?"

But there was no answer. Clausen was like stone in the water. Joel cast a despairing glance toward the bluff. Then his eyes brightened, for there sliding down the bank he saw a crowd of boys, and as he looked another on the bluff threw down a coil of new rope that shone in the afternoon sunlight as it fell and was seized by some one in the throng below.

Nerved afresh, Joel took a firm grasp on Clausen's elbow and struck out manfully for shore. It was hard going, and when a bare dozen long strokes had been made his burden so dragged him down that he was obliged to stop, and, floundering desperately to keep the white face above water, take a fresh store of breath into his aching lungs. Then drawing the other boy to him so that his weight fell on his back, he brought one limp arm about his shoulder, and holding it there with his left hand started swimming once more. A dozen more strokes were accomplished slowly, painfully, and then, as encouraging shouts came from shore, he felt the body above him stir into life, heard a low cry of terror in his ear, and then—they were sinking together, Clausen and he,

struggling there beneath the surface! Clausen had his arm about Joel's neck and was pulling him down—down! And just as his lungs seemed upon the point of bursting the grasp relaxed around his neck, the body began to sink and Joel to rise!

With a deafening noise as of rushing water in his ears, Joel reached, caught a handful of cloth, and struggled, half drowned himself, to the surface. And then some one caught him by the chin—and he knew no more until he awoke as from a bad dream to find himself lying in the sun on the narrow beach, while several faces looked down into his.

"Did you get him?" he asked weakly.

"Yep," answered Outfield West, with something that sounded like a sob in his voice. "He's over there. He's all right. Don't get up," he continued, as Joel tried to move. "Stay where you are. The fellows are bringing a boat, and we'll take you both back in it."

"All right," answered Joel. "But I guess I'll just look around a bit." And he sat up. At a little distance a group among which Joel recognized the broad back of Professor Gibbs were still working over Clausen. But even as he looked Joel was delighted to see Clausen's legs move and hear his weak voice speaking to the professor. Then the boat was rowed in, the occupants panting with their hurried pull from the boathouse, and Joel clambered aboard, disdaining the proffered help of

West and others, and Clausen was lifted to a seat in the bow.

On the way up river Joel told how it happened, West throwing in an eager word here and there, and Clausen in a low whisper explaining that the shell had struck on a sunken rock or snag when passing the island, and had begun to sink almost immediately.

"And Cloud?" asked Professor Gibbs. There was no reply from either Joel or Clausen or West. Only one of the rowers answered coldly:

"He's safe. I saw him on the path near the Society Building. He was running toward Warren." A silence followed. Then—

"You've never learned to swim, Clausen?"

"No, sir."

"But it is the rule that no boy is allowed on the river who can not swim. How is that?"

"I—I said I could, sir."

"Humph! Your lie came near to costing you dear, Clausen."

Then no more was said in the boat until the float was reached, although each occupant was busy with his thoughts. Clausen was helped, pale and shaking, to his room, and West and Joel, accompanied by several of their schoolmates, trotted away to the gymnasium, where Joel was put through an invigorating bath and a subsequent rubbing that left him none the worse for his adventure. The story

had to be told over and over to each new group that came in after practice, and finally the two friends escaped to West's room, where they discussed the affair from the view-point of participants.

"When I got back to the bluff with the other fellows you weren't to be seen, Joel," West was saying, "and I thought it was all up with poor old Joel March."

"That's just what I thought a bit later," responded Joel, "when that fellow had me round the neck and was trying to show me the bottom of the river."

"And then, when they brought you in, Whipple and Christie, and you were all white and—and ghastly like, you know"—Outfield West whistled long and expressively—"then I thought you *were* a goner."

Joel nodded. "And Cloud?" he asked presently.

"Cloud has settled himself," responded West. "When he thought Clausen was drowning he just cut and ran—I mean swam—to shore. The fellows are madder than hornets. As Whipple said, you can't insist on a fellow saving another fellow from drowning, but you can insist on his not running away. They're planning to show Cloud what they think of him, somehow. They wouldn't talk about it while I was around. I wonder why?" Outfield stopped suddenly and frowned perplexedly. "Why, a month or six weeks ago I would have been one of the first they would have asked to help! I'm afraid it's associating with you, Joel. You're corrupting me! Say, didn't I make a mess of it this

afternoon? I got about ten yards off the beach and just had to give up and pull back—and pull hard. Blessed if I didn't begin to wonder once if I'd make it! The fact is, Joel, I'm an awful dab at swimming. And I ought to be punched for letting you go out there all alone."

"Nonsense, Out! You couldn't help getting tired, especially if you aren't much of a swimmer. And now you speak of it I remember you saying once that you couldn't——" Joel stopped short and looked at West in wondering amazement. And West grew red and his eyes sought the floor, and for almost a minute there was silence in the room. Then Joel arose and stood over the other lad with shining eyes.

"Out," he muttered huskily, "you're a brick!"

West made no reply, but his feet shuffled nervously on the hearth.

"To think of you starting out there after me! Why, you're the—the hero, Out; not me at all!"

"Oh, shut up!" muttered West.

"I'll not! I'll tell every one in school!" cried Joel. "I'll——"

"If you do, Joel March, I'll thrash you!" cried West.

"You can't!—you can't, Out!" Then he paused and laid a hand affectionately on the other's shoulder as he asked softly:

"And it's really so, Out? You can't——" West shook his head.

"I'm afraid it's so, Joel," he answered apologetically. "You see out in Iowa there isn't much chance for a chap to learn, and—and so before this afternoon, Joel, I never swam a stroke in my life."

CHAPTER XII.

THE PROBATION OF BLAIR.

Wallace Clausen's narrow escape from death and Joel's heroic rescue were nine-day wonders in the little world of the academy and village. In every room that night the incident was discussed from A to Z: Clausen's foolhardiness, March's grit and courage, West's coolness, Cloud's cowardice. And next morning at chapel when Joel, fearing to be late, hurried in and down the side aisle to his seat, his appearance was the signal for such an enthusiastic outburst of cheers and acclamations that he stopped, looked about in bewilderment, and then slipped with crimson cheeks into his seat, the very uncomfortable cynosure of all eyes.

Older boys, who were supposed to know, stoutly averred that such a desecration of the sacred solitude of chapel had never before been heard of, and "Peg-Leg," long since recovered from his contact with the bell rope, shook his gray head doubtfully, and joined his feeble tones with the cheers of the others. And then Professor Wheeler made his voice heard, and commanded silence very sternly, yet with a lurking smile, and silence was almost secured when, just as the

door was being closed, Outfield West slipped through, smiling, his handsome face flushed from his tear across the yard. And again the applause burst forth, scarcely less great in volume or enthusiasm, and West literally bolted back to the door, found it closed, was met with a grinning shake of the head from Duffy, looked wildly about for an avenue of escape, and finding none, slunk to his seat at Joel's side, while the boys joined laughter at his plight to their cheers for his courage.

"You promised not to tell!" hissed West with blazing cheek.

"I didn't, Out; not a word," whispered Joel.

Many eyes were still turned toward the door, but their owners were doomed to disappointment, for Bartlett Cloud failed to appear at chapel that morning, preferring to accept the penalty of absence rather than face his fellow-pupils assembled there in a body. But he did not escape public degradation; for, although he waited until the last moment to go to breakfast, he found the hall filled, and so passed to his seat amid a storm of hisses that plainly told the contempt in which his schoolmates held him. And then, as though scorning to remain in his presence, the place emptied as though by magic, and he was left with burning cheeks to eat his breakfast in solitude.

Joel and Outfield were publicly thanked and commended by the principal, and every master had a handshake and a kind and earnest word for them. The boys learned that

Clausen had taken a severe cold from his immersion in the icy water, and had gone to the infirmary. Thither they went and made inquiry. He would be up in a day or two, said Mrs. Creelman; but they could not see him, since Professor Gibbs had charged that the patient was not to be disturbed. And so, leaving word for him when he should awake, Joel and West took themselves away, relieved at not having to receive any more thanks just then.

But three days later Clausen left the infirmary fully recovered, and Joel came face to face with him on the steps of Academy Building. A number of fellows on their way to recitations stopped and watched the meeting. Clausen colored painfully, appeared to hesitate for a moment, and then went to Joel and held out his hand, which was taken and gripped warmly.

"March, it's hard work thanking a fellow for saving your life, and—I don't know how to do it very well. But I guess you'll understand that—that— Oh, hang it, March! you know what I'd like to say. I'm more grateful than I could tell you—ever. We haven't been friends, but it was my fault, I know, and if you'll let me, I'd like to be—to know you better."

"You're more than welcome, Clausen, for what I did. I'm awfully glad West and I happened to be on hand. But there wasn't anything that you or any fellow couldn't have done just as well, or better, because I came plaguey near making a mess of it. Anyhow, it's well through with. As

for being friends, I'll be very glad to be, Clausen. And if you don't mind climbing stairs, and have a chance, come up and see me this evening. Will you?"

"Yes, thanks. Er—well, to-night, then." And Clausen strode off.

After supper West and Clausen came up to Joel's room, and the four boys sat and discussed all the topics known to school. Richard Sproule was at his best, and strove to do his share of the entertaining, succeeding quite beyond Joel's expectations. When the conversation drew around to the subject of the upsetting on the river, Clausen seemed willing enough to tell his own experiences, but became silent when Cloud's name was mentioned.

"I've changed my room, and haven't seen Cloud since to speak to," he said. And so Cloud's name was omitted from discussion.

"I'm sorry," said Clausen, "that I made such a dunce of myself when you were trying to get me out. I don't believe I knew what I was doing. I don't remember it at all."

"I'm sure you didn't," answered Joel. "I guess a fellow just naturally wouldn't, you know. But I was glad when you let go!"

"Yes, you must have been. The fellows all say you were terribly plucky to keep at it the way you did. When they got you it was all they could do to make you let go of me, they say."

"The queerest thing," said West, with a laugh, "was to see Post standing on shore and trying to throw a line to you all. It never came within twenty yards of you, but he kept on shouting: 'Catch hold—catch hold, can't you? Why don't you catch hold, you stupid apes?'"

"And some one told me," said Sproule, "that Whipple took his shoes, sweater, and breeches off, and swam out there with his nose-guard on."

"Used it for a life-preserver," suggested West.—"Did you get lectured, Clausen?"

"Yes, he gave it to me hard; but he's a nice old duffer, after all. Said I had had pretty near punishment enough. But I've got to keep in bounds all term, and can't go on the river again until I learn how to swim."

"Shouldn't think you'd want to," answered Sproule.

"Are you still on probation, March?" asked Clausen.

"Yes, and it doesn't look as though I'd ever get off. If I could find out who cut that rope I'd—I'd——"

"Well, I must be going back," exclaimed Clausen hurriedly. "I wish, March, you'd come and see me some time. My room's 16 Warren. I'm in with a junior by the name of Bowler. Know him?"

Joel didn't know the junior, but promised to call, and West and Clausen said good-night and stumbled down the stairway together.

The next morning Joel dashed out from his history reci-

tation plump into Stephen Remsen, who was on his way to the office.

"Well, March, congratulations! I'm just back from a trip home and was going to look you up this afternoon and shake hands with you. I'll do it now. You're a modest-enough-looking hero, March."

"I don't feel like a hero, either," laughed Joel in an endeavor to change the subject. "I'm just out from Greek history, and if I could tell Mr. Oman what I think——"

"Yes? But tell me, how did you manage— But we'll talk about that some other time. You're feeling all right after the wetting, are you?" And as Joel answered yes, he continued: "Do you think you could go to work again on the team if I could manage to get you off probation?"

"Try me!" cried Joel. "Do you think they'll let up on me?"

"I'm almost certain of it. I'm on my way now to see Professor Wheeler, and I'll ask him about you. I have scarcely any doubt but that, after your conduct the other day, he will consent to reinstate you, March, if I ask him. And I shall be mighty glad to do so. To tell the truth, I'm worried pretty badly about—well, never mind. Never cross a river until you come to it."

"But, Mr. Remsen, sir," said Joel, "do you mean that he will let me play just because—just on account of what happened the other day?"

"On account of that and because your general conduct

has been of the best; and also, because they have all along believed you innocent of the charge, March. You know I told you that when Cloud and Clausen were examined each swore that the other had not left the room that evening, and accounted for each other's every moment all that day. But, nevertheless, I am positive that Professor Wheeler took little stock in their testimony. And as for Professor Durkee, why, he pooh-pooed the whole thing. You seem to have made a conquest of Professor Durkee, March."

"He was very kind," answered Joel thoughtfully. "I don't believe, Mr. Remsen, that I want to be let off that way," he went on. "I'm no less guilty of cutting the bell rope than I was before the accident on the river. And until I can prove that I am not guilty, or until they let me off of their own free wills, I'd rather stay on probation. But I'm very much obliged to you, Mr. Remsen."

And to this resolve Joel adhered, despite all Remsen's powers of persuasion. And finally that gentleman continued on his way to the office, looking very worried.

The cause of his worry was known to the whole school two days later when the news was circulated that Wesley Blair was on probation. And great was the consternation. The football game with St. Eustace Academy was fast approaching, and there was no time to train a satisfactory substitute for Blair's position at full-back, even had one been in reach. And Whipple as temporary captain was well enough, but Whipple as captain during the big game was

not to be thought of with equanimity. The backs had already been weakened by the loss of Cloud, who, despite his poor showing the first of the season, had it in him to put up a rattling game. And now to lose Blair! What did the faculty mean? Did it want Hillton to lose? But presently hope took the place of despair among the pupils. He was going to coach up and pass a special exam the day before the game. Professor Ludlow was to help him with his modern languages and Remsen with his mathematics, while Digbee, that confirmed old grind, had offered to coach him on Greek. And so it would be all right, said the school; you couldn't down Blair; he'd pass when the time came!

But Remsen—and Blair himself, had the truth been known—were not so hopeful. And Remsen went to West and besought him to induce Joel to allow him (Remsen) to ask for his reinstatement. And this West very readily did, bringing to bear a whole host of arguments which slid off from Joel like water from a duck's back. And Remsen groaned and shook his head, but always presented a smiling, cheerful countenance in public. Those were hard days for the first eleven. Despair and discouragement threatened on all sides, and, as every thoughtful one expected, there was such a slump in the practice as kept Remsen and Whipple and poor Blair awake o' nights during the next week. But Whipple toiled like a Trojan, and Remsen beamed contentment and scattered tongue-lashings alternately; and

Blair, ever armed with a text-book, watched from the side-line whenever the chance offered.

Joel seldom went to the field those days. The sight of a canvas-clad player made him ready to weep, and a soaring pigskin sent him wandering away by himself along the river bluff in no enviable state of mind. But one day he did find his way to the gridiron during practice, and he and Blair sat side by side, or raced down the field, even with a runner, and received much consolation in the sort of company that misery loves, and, deep in discussion of the faults and virtues of the players, forgot their troubles.

"Why, it wouldn't have mattered if you were playing, March," said Blair. "For there's no harm in telling you now that we were depending on you for half the punting. Remsen thinks you are fine and so do I. 'With March to take half the punting off your hands,' said he one day, 'you'll have plenty of time to run the team to the Queen's taste.' Why, we had you running on the track there, so you would get your lungs filled out and be able to run with the ball as well as kick it. If you were playing we'd be all right. But as it is, there isn't a player there that can be depended on to punt twenty yards if pushed. Some of 'em can't even catch the ball if they happen to see the line breaking! St. Eustace is eight pounds heavier in the line than we are, and three or four pounds heavier back of it. So what will happen? Why, they'll get the ball and push us right down the field with a lot of measly mass plays, and we won't be able

to kick and we won't be able to go through their line. And it's dollars to doughnuts that we won't often get round their ends. It's a hard outlook! Of course, if I can pass—" But there Blair stopped and sighed dolefully. And Joel echoed the sigh.

The last few days before the event of the term came, and found the first eleven in something approaching their old form. Blair continued to burn the midnight oil and consume page after page of Greek and mathematics and German, which, as he confided despondently to Digbee, he promptly forgot the next moment. Remsen made up a certain amount of lost sleep, and Whipple gained the confidence of the team. Joel studied hard, and refound his old interest in lessons, and dreamed nightly of the Goodwin scholarship. West, too, "put in some hard licks," as he phrased it, and found himself climbing slowly up in the class scale. And so the day of the game came round.

The night preceding it two things of interest happened: the eleven and substitutes assembled in the gymnasium and listened to a talk by Remsen, which was designed less for instruction than to take the boys' mind off the morrow's game; and Wesley Blair took his examination in the four neglected studies, and made very hard work of it, and finally crawled off to a sleepless night, leaving the professors to make their decision alone.

And as the chapel bell began to ring on Thanksgiving Day morning, Digbee entered Blair's room, and finding that

youth in a deep slumber, sighed, wrote a few words on a sheet of paper, placed this in plain sight upon the table, and tiptoed noiselessly out.

And the message read:

"We failed on the Greek. I'm sorrier than I can tell you.—Digbee."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GAME WITH ST. EUSTACE.

There is a tradition at Hillton, almost as firmly inwrought as that which credits Professor Durkee with wearing a wig, to the effect that Thanksgiving Day is always rainy. To-day proved an exception to the rule. The sun shone quite warmly and scarce a cloud was to be seen. At two o'clock the grand stand was filled, and late arrivals had perforce to find accommodations on the grass along the side-lines. Some fifty lads had accompanied their team from St. Eustace, and the portion of the stand where they sat was blue from top to bottom. But the crimson of Hillton fluttered and waved on either side and dotted the field with little spots of vivid color wherever a Hilltonian youth or ally sat, strolled, or lay.

Yard and village were alike well-nigh deserted; here was the staid professor, the corpulent grocer, the irrepressible small boy, the important-looking senior, the shouting, careless junior, the giggling sister, the smiling mother, the patronizing papa, the crimson-bedecked waitress from the boarding house, the—the—band! Yes, by all means, the band! There was no chance of overlooking the band. It stood at

the upper end of the field and played and played and played. The band never did things by halves. When it played it played; and, as Outfield West affirmed, "it played till the cows came home!"

There were plenty of familiar faces here to-day; Professor Gibbs's, old "Peg-Leg" Duffy's, Professor Durkee's, the village postmaster's, "Old Joe" Pike's, and many, many others. On the ground just outside the rope sat West and a throng of boys from Hampton House. There were Cooke and Cartwright and Somers and Digbee—and yes, Wesley Blair, looking very glum and unhappy. He had donned his football clothes, perhaps from force of habit, and sat there taking little part in the conversation, but studying attentively the blue-clad youths who were warming-up on the gridiron. A very stalwart lot of youngsters, those same youths looked to be, and handled the ball as though to the manner born, and passed and fell and kicked short high punts with discouraging ease and vim.

But one acquaintance at least was missing. Not Bartlett Cloud, for he sat with his sister and mother on the seats; not Clausen, for he sat among the substitutes; not Sproule, since he was present but a moment since. But Joel March was missing. In his room at Masters Hall Joel sat by the table with a Greek history open before him. I fear he was doing but little studying, for now and then he arose from his chair, walked impatiently to the window, from which he could see in the distance the thronged field, bright with life and color,

turned impatiently away, sighed, and so returned again to his book. But surely we can not tarry there with Joel when Hillton and St. Eustace are about to meet in gallant if bloodless combat on the campus. Let us leave him to sigh and sulk, and return to the gridiron.

A murmur that rapidly grows to a shout arises from the grand stand, and suddenly every eye is turned up the river path toward the school. They are coming! A little band of canvas-armored knights are trotting toward the campus. The shouting grows in volume, and the band changes its tune to "Hilltonians." Nearer and nearer they come, and then are swinging on to the field, leaping the rope, and throwing aside sweaters and coats. Big Greer is in the lead, good-natured and smiling. Then comes Whipple, then Warren, and the others are in a bunch—Post, Christie, Fenton, Littlefield, Barnard, Turner, Cote, Wills. The St. Eustace contingent gives them a royal welcome, and West and Cooke and Somers and others take their places in front of the seats and lead the cheering.

"Rah-rah-rah, rah-rah-rah, rah-rah-rah, Hillton!" The mighty chorus sweeps across the campus and causes more than one player's heart to swell within him.

"S-E-A, S-E-A, S-E-A, Saint Eustace!" What the cheer lacks in volume is atoned for by good will, and a clapping of hands from the hostile seats attests admiration. Hillton is warming for the fray. Greer and Whipple are practicing snapping-back, the latter passing the ball to War-

ren, who seizes it and runs a few steps to a new position, where the play is repeated. The guards and tackles are throwing themselves on to the ground and clutching rolling footballs in a way that draws a shudder of alarm from the feminine observer. Stephen Remsen is talking with the ends very earnestly under the goal posts, and Post and Wills are aiming balls at the goal with, it must be acknowledged, small success.

Then a whistle blows, the two teams congregate in the center of the field, the opposing captains flip a coin, the referee, a Yates College man, utters a few words of warning, and the teams separate, St. Eustace taking the ball and the home team choosing the northern goal. Then the cheering lessens. St. Eustace spreads out; Cantrell, their center, places the ball; the referee's whistle sounds, the pigskin soars aloft, and the game is on.

In charity toward Hillton let us pass over the first half as soon as may be. Suffice to tell that the wearers of the crimson fought their best; that Whipple ran the team as well as even Remsen could desire; that Post made a startling run of forty yards, had only the St. Eustace full-back between him and the goal—and then ran plump into that full-back's arms; that Greer and Barnard and Littlefield stood like a stone wall—and went down like one; that Wills kicked, and Post kicked, and Warren kicked, and none of them accomplished aught save to wring groans from the souls of all who looked on. In short, it was St. Eustace's half from kick-off to call

of time, and all because Hillton had never a youth behind the line to kick out of danger or gain them a yard. For St. Eustace was heavier in the line than Hillton and heavier back of it, and with the ball once in her possession St. Eustace had only to hammer away at center, guard, or tackle with "guards back" or "tandem," to score eventually. And that is what she did. And yet four times did Hillton hold St. Eustace literally on her goal-line and take the ball. And each time by hook or crook, by a short, weak punt or a clever, dashing run around end, did Hillton win back a portion of her lost territory, only to lose it again at the second or third attempt to advance the ball.

The halves were twenty-five minutes long, and in that first twenty-five minutes St. Eustace scored but once, though near it thrice that many times. Allen, St. Eustace's right half-back, had plunged over the line for a touch-down at the end of fifteen minutes of play and Terrill had missed an easy goal. Then the grand stand was silent save for one small patch, whereon blue flags went crazy and swirled and leaped and danced up and down as though possessed of life. And over the field sped, sharp and triumphant, the St. Eustace cheer. And the score stood: St. Eustace 5, Hillton 0.

The first half ended with the leather but ten yards from the north goal, and a great murmuring sigh of relief went up from the seats and from along the side-lines when the whistle sounded. Then the Hillton players, pale, dirty, half defeated, trotted lamely off the field and around the corner

of the stand to the little weather-beaten shed which served for dressing room. And the blue-clad team trotted joyfully down to their stage, and there, behind the canvas protections were rubbed down and plastered up, and slapped on the back by their delighted coach and trainer.

In the Hillton quarters life was less cheerful during the ten minutes of intermission. After the fellows had rubbed and redressed, Remsen talked for a minute or two. There was no scolding, and no signs of either disappointment or discouragement. But he cautioned the team against carelessness, predicted a tied score at the end of fifteen minutes, and called for three-times-three for Hillton, which was given with reviving enthusiasm. A moment later the team trotted back to the field.

"Touch her down,
Touch her down,
Touch her down again!
H-I-double-L-T-O-N!"

chanted the wearers of the crimson; and—

"St. Eustace! St. Eustace! St. Eustace!" shouted the visitors as they waved their bright blue banners in air. The whistle piped merrily, the ball took its flight, and it was now or never for old Hillton!

Stephen Remsen joined the string of substitutes and found a seat on the big gray blanket which held Browne and Clausen. From there he followed the progress of the game. Outwardly he was as happy and contented, as cool and dis-

interested, as one of the goal posts. Inwardly he was railing against the fate that had deprived Hillton of both the players who, had they been in the team, could have saved the crimson from defeat. Wesley Blair joined him, and with scarce a word they watched St. Eustace revert to her previous tactics, and tear great gaping holes in the Hillton line, holes often large enough to admit of a coach and four, and more than large enough to allow Allen or Jansen to go tearing, galloping through, with the ball safe clutched, for three, five, or even a dozen yards!

No line can long stand such treatment, and, while the one-hundred-and-fifty-pound Greer still held out, Barnard, the big right-guard, was already showing signs of distress. St. Eustace's next play was a small wedge on tackle, and although Barnard threw himself with all his remaining strength into the breach he was tossed aside like a bag of feathers and through went the right and left half-backs, followed by full with the ball, and pushed onward by left-end and quarter. When down was called the ball was eight yards nearer Hillton's goal, and Barnard lay still on the ground.

Whipple held up his hand. Thistelweight—a youth of some one hundred and forty pounds—struggled agitatedly with his sweater and bounded into the field, and Barnard, white and weak, was helped limping off. For awhile St. Eustace fought shy of right-guard, and then again the weight of all the backs was suddenly massed at that point, and,

though a yard resulted, the crimson wearers found cause for joy, and a ringing cheer swept over the field. But Littlefield at left-guard was also weakening, and the tackle beside him was in scarce better plight. And so, with tandem on tackle, wedge, or guard back, St. Eustace plowed along toward the Hillton goal, and a deep silence held the field save for the squad of blue-decked cheerers on the seats.

Remsen looked at his watch. "Eighteen minutes to play," he announced quietly. Blair nodded. He made no attempt to disguise his dejection. Clausen heard, and suddenly turned toward the coach. He was pale, and Remsen wondered at his excitement.

"Can't we tie them, sir?" he asked breathlessly.

"I'm afraid not. And even if we could they'd break loose." Clausen paid no heed to the sorry joke.

"But they'll win, sir! Isn't there anything to do?" Remsen stared. Then he smiled. "Failing an extraordinary piece of luck, my lad, we're already beaten. Our line can't hold them; we have no one to kick, even should we get a chance, and——"

"But if Blair was there, sir, or March?"

"It might make a difference. Hello! there they go through tackle-guard hole again. Lord, six yards if an inch!" Blair groaned and rolled over in despair. The whistle sounded, and as the pile of writhing youths dissolved it was seen that Tom Warren was hurt. Out trotted the rubber. The players sank exhausted to the ground and lay

stretched upon the sward, puffing and panting. Two minutes went by. Then Whipple called for Clausen.

"Clausen," cried Remsen turning, "go in and——" But Clausen was not to be seen. "Clausen!" cried a dozen voices. There was no response, and Browne was taken on instead, and Warren, with an ankle that failed him at every step, struggled off the field.

"What's become of Clausen?" asked Remsen. But no one could answer.

The play went on. With the ball on Hillton's twenty-yard line a fumble gave it to the home team, and on the first down Browne gathered it in his arms and tried to skirt St. Eustace's left end, but was thrown with a loss of a yard. A similar play with Wills as the runner was tried around the other end and netted a yard and a half. It was the third down and four and a half yards to gain. Back went the ball to Post and he kicked. But it was a poor performance, that kick, and only drove the pigskin down the side-line to the forty-yard line, where it bounded in touch. But it delayed the evil moment of another score for St. Eustace, and the seats cheered.

"Twelve minutes left," announced Remsen.

Relentless as fate the St. Eustace forwards surged on toward the opposing goal. Two yards, three yards, one yard, five yards, half a yard, always a gain, never a check, until once more the leather reposed just in front of the Hillton goal and midway between the ten- and fifteen-yard line. Then

a plunge through the tackle-guard hole, followed by a tandem on guard, and another five yards was passed. The cheering from the wearers of the blue was now frantic and continuous. There was two years of defeat to make up for, and victory was hovering over the azure banner!

"Eight minutes to play," said Remsen. "If we can only keep them from scoring again!" Suddenly there was a murmur from the seats, then a cry of surprise from Remsen's side, then a shout of exultation that gathered and grew as it traveled along the line. And around the corner of the stand came a youth who strove to lace his torn and tattered canvas jacket as he ran. Remsen leaped to his feet, dropping his pipe unnoticed, and hastened toward him. They met and for a moment conversed in whispers.

"It's Joel March!" cried Blair. "He's going to play!" exclaimed a dozen voices. "But he can't," cried a dozen others. "He's on probation." "He is! He is! He's going on! He's going to play!"

And so he was. Whipple had already seen him, and had sunk to the ground nursing an ankle which had suddenly gone lame. "Time!" he cried, and obedient to his demand the referee's whistle piped. "Give your place to Post, Wills!" he commanded, and then, limping to Joel, he led that youth apart.

"Can you play?" he asked hoarsely.

"Yes."

"Then get in there at full-back, and, O March, kick us

out of this bloody place! I'll give you the ball on the next down. Kick it for all you're worth." He gave Joel a shove. "All right, Mr. Referee!" The whistle sounded.

Forward charged St. Eustace. But, gathering encouragement from the knowledge that back of them stood a full who would put them out of danger if the opportunity were given him, Hillton stood fast.

"Second down, five yards to gain!" cried the umpire.

Again the wearers of bedraggled blue stockings surged and broke against the line. And again there was no gain. Back of Hillton, less than eight yards away, lay the goal-line. Desperation lends strength. Huddled together, shoulder to shoulder, the backs bracing from behind, the crimson-clad youths awaited the next charge. It was "the thin red line" again. Then back went the ball, there was a moment of grinding canvas, of muttered words and smothered gasps, of swaying, clutching, falling, and "Down!" was heard.

"Hillton's ball; first down," announced the umpire.

What a cheer went up from the grand stand! What joy was in Remsen's heart as the St. Eustace full-back went trotting up the field and Greer stooped over the ball! Then came a pause, a silence. Every one knew what to look for. Squarely between the posts and directly under the cross-bar stood Joel March, his left foot on the goal-line. Back came the ball, straight and low into Joel's outstretched hands. The line blocked long and hard. One step forward, an easy, long swing of his right leg, and Joel sent the ball sailing a

yard over the upstretched hands of the opposing line and far and high down the field.

There it was gathered into the arms of the St. Eustace full-back, but ere that player had put his foot twice to ground he was thrown, and the teams lined up on St. Eustace's forty-five-yard line. Then it was that the god of battle befriended Hillton; for on the next play St. Eustace made her first disastrous fumble, and Christie, Hillton's right end, darted through, seized the rolling spheroid, and started down the field. Five, ten, fifteen, twenty yards he sped, the St. Eustace backs trailing after him.

"A touch-down!" cried Remsen. "No, the half's gaining! He's got him! No, missed him, by Jove! A-ah!"

The run was over, and Christie lay panting on the ground, with the triumphant St. Eustace half-back sitting serenely on his head; for, although the latter had missed his tackle, Christie had slipped in avoiding him. But cheers for Christie and Hillton filled the afternoon air, and the two elevens lined up near St. Eustace's twenty-five-yard line, yet well over toward the side of the field.

"If it was only in the middle of the field," groaned Blair, "a place-kick would tie the score. How much time is there, Mr. Remsen?"

"About two and a half minutes," answered Remsen. "But I've an idea that, middle or no middle, Whipple's going to signal a kick."

"It can't be done," answered Blair with conviction, "drop

or placement! March is only fair at goals, and at that angle——"

"What's the matter with the man?" cried Remsen; "what's he up to?" For the Hillton backs were clustered well up behind the line as though for a wedge attack. And as Remsen wondered, the ball was put in play, the line blocked sharply, and Christie left his place at right end, and skirting behind the backs received the ball by a double pass *via* right half-back and ran for the middle of the field, the backs helping the end and tackle to hold the St. Eustace right line. Christie gained the center of the gridiron and advanced a yard toward the opponent's goal ere the St. Eustace right half-back reached him. Then there was a quick line-up, and Joel took up his position for a kick.

"Well done, Whipple!" cried Remsen and Blair in a breath.

"But the time!" muttered Remsen, "does he know——"

"One minute to play!" came the ominous announcement.

Then, while a snap of the fingers could have been heard the length of the field, Whipple glanced deliberately around at the backs, slapped the broad back of the center sharply, seized the snapped ball, and made a swift, straight pass to Joel. Then through the Hillton line went the St. Eustace players, breaking down with vigor born of desperation the blocking of their opponents. With a leap into the air the St. Eustace left-guard bore down straight upon Joel; there was

a concussion, and the latter went violently to earth, but not before his toe had met the rebounding ball; and the latter, describing a high arc, sailed safely, cleanly over the bar and between the posts! And then, almost before the ball had touched the ground, the whistle blew shrilly, and apparent defeat had been turned into what was as good as victory to the triumphant wearers of the Hillton crimson!

Hillton and St. Eustace had played a tie.

And over the ropes, rushing, leaping, shouting, broke the tide of humanity, crimson flags swirled over a sea of heads, and pandemonium ruled the campus!

And on the ground where he had fallen lay Joel March

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GOODWIN SCHOLARSHIP.

"But how did it all happen?" asked Outfield West breathlessly.

He had just entered and was seated on the edge of the bed whereon Joel lay propped up eating his Thanksgiving dinner from a tray. It was seven o'clock in the evening, and Dickey Sproule was not yet back. The yard was noisy with the shouts of lads returning from the dining hall, and an occasional cheer floated up, an echo of the afternoon's event. Joel moved a dish of pudding away from Outfield's elbow as he answered between mouthfuls of turkey:

"I was up here studying at the table there when I heard some one coming up stairs two steps at a time. It was Clausen. He threw open the door and cried: 'They're winning, March, they're winning! Come quick! Remsen says we can tie them if you play. It's all right, March. We'll go to the office and I'll tell everything. Only come, hurry!' Well, of course I thought first he was crazy. Then I guessed what was up, because I knew that Eustace had scored——"

"You couldn't have known: you were studying."

"Well, I—I wasn't studying all the time, Out. So up I jumped, and we raced over to the office and found Professor Wheeler there asleep on the leather couch under the window. 'It was Cloud and I, sir, that cut the rope!' said Clausen. 'I'm very sorry, sir, and I'll take the punishment and glad to. But March hadn't anything to do with it, sir; he didn't even know anything about it, sir!' Professor Wheeler was about half awake, and he thought something terrible was the matter, and it took the longest time to explain what Clausen was talking about. Then he said he was glad to learn that I was innocent, and I thanked him, and he started to ask Clausen a lot of questions. 'But St. Eustace is winning, sir!' I cried. He looked at me in astonishment. 'Indeed, I'm very sorry to hear it,' he said. 'But it isn't too late now, sir,' said Clausen. 'For what?' asked 'Wheels.' 'For me to go on the team,' said I. 'You know, sir, you put me on probation and I can't play.' 'Oh,' said he, 'but you were put on probation by the faculty, and the faculty must take you off.' 'But meanwhile Hillton will be beaten!' cried Clausen. 'Can't he play, sir? He can save the day!' Wheels thought a bit. 'What's the score?' he asked. Clausen told him. 'Yes,' he said at last, 'run and get to work. I'll explain to the faculty. And by the way, March, remember that a kick into touch is always the safest.'"

"Isn't he a rummy old guy?" exclaimed West. "And then?"

"Then I struck out for the gym, got into my canvas togs somehow or other, and reached the field just about in time. Luckily I knew the signals. And then after I'd kicked that goal that big Eustace chap struck me like a locomotive, and I went down on the back of my head; and that's all except that they brought me up here and Professor Gibbs plastered me up and gave me a lot of nasty sweet water to take."

"And Clausen?"

"From the little I heard I think Cloud cut the rope and made Clausen promise not to tell. And he kept his promise until he saw Hillton getting beaten yesterday, and then he couldn't stand it, and just up and told everything, and saved us a licking."

"Didn't I tell you Cloud did it? Didn't I——" There came a knock on the door and in response to Joel's invitation Professor Wheeler and Stephen Remsen entered. West leaped off the bed—there is a rule at Hillton forbidding occupying beds save for sleep—and upset Joel's tea. Professor Wheeler smiled as he said:

"West, you're rather an uneasy fellow to have in a sick-room. Get something and dry that off the floor there, please. —Well, March, I understand you got there in the nick of time to-day. Mr. Remsen says you saved us from defeat."

"Indeed he did, professor; no one else save Blair could have done it to-day. That goal from the twenty-five-yard

line was as pretty a performance as I've ever seen.—How are you feeling, lad?"

"All right," answered Joel. "I've got a bit of a headache, but I'll be better in the morning."

"Your appetite doesn't seem to have failed you," said the principal.

"No, sir, I was terribly hungry."

"That's a good sign, they say.—West, you may take your seat again." The professor and Stephen Remsen occupied the two chairs, and West without hesitation sat down again on the bed.

"March, I have learned the truth of that affair. Bartlett Cloud, it appears, cut the bell rope simply in order to throw suspicion on you. He managed to secure a letter of yours through—hem!—through your roommate, who, it seems, also bears you a grudge for some real or fancied slight. Clausen, while a party to the affair, appears to have taken no active part in it, and only remained silent because threatened with bodily punishment by Cloud. These boys will be dealt with as they deserve.

"But I wish to say to you that all along it has been the belief of the faculty, the entire faculty, that you had no hand in the matter, and we are all glad to have our judgments vindicated. An announcement will be made to-morrow which will set you right again before the school. And now, in regard to Richard Sproule; do you know of any reason why he should wish you harm?"

"No, sir. We don't get along very well, but——"

"I see. Now, it will be best for you to change either your room or your roommate. Have you any preference which you do?"

"I should like to change my room, sir. I should like to go in with West. He has a room to himself in Hampton, and wants to have me join him."

"But do you realize that the rent will be very much greater, March?"

"Yes, sir, but West wants me to pay only what I have paid for this room, sir. He says he'd have to pay for the whole room if I didn't go in with him, and so it's fair that way. Do you think it is, sir?"

"What would your father say, West?"

"I've asked him, sir. He says to go ahead and do as I please." The principal smiled as he replied:

"Well, March, then move over to West's room to-morrow. It will be all fair enough. And I shall be rather glad to have you in Hampton House. Digbee is an example of splendid isolation there; it will be well to have some one help him maintain the dignity of study amid such a number of—er—well, say lilies of the field, West; they toil not, if you remember, and neither do they spin. Don't get up in the morning if your head still hurts, March; we don't want you to get sick. —Keep a watch on him, West; and, by the way, if he wants more tea, run over to the dining hall and

tell the steward I said he was to have it. Good-night, boys."

"Good-night, sir." Remsen shook hands with Joel.

"March, I hope I shall be able to repay you some day for what you did this afternoon. It meant more to me, I believe, than it did to even you fellows. I'm going Thursday next. Come and see me before then if you can. Good-night."

When the door had closed Outfield shouted, "Hurrah!" in three different keys and pirouetted about the room. "It's all fixed, Joel. Welcome to Hampton, my lad! Welcome to the classic shades of Donothing Hall! We will live on pickles and comb-honey, and feast like the Romans of old! We——" He paused. "Say, Joel, I guess Cloud will be expelled, eh?" Joel considered thoughtfully with a spoonful of rice pudding midway between saucer and mouth. Then he swallowed the delicacy. "Yes," he replied, "and I'm awful glad of it."

But Joel was mistaken; for Cloud was not to be found the next morning, and the condition of his room pointed to hasty flight. He had taken alarm and saved himself from the degradation of public dismissal. And so he passed from Hillton life and was known there no more. Clausen escaped with a light punishment, for which both Joel and West were heartily glad. "Because when you get him away from Cloud," said West, "Clausen's not a bad sort, you know."

Richard Sproule was suspended for the balance of the

fall term, and was no longer monitor of his floor. Perhaps the heaviest punishment was the amount of study he was required to do in order to return after Christmas recess, entailing as it did a total relinquishment of Mayne Reid, Scott, and Cooper. And when he did return his ways led far from Joel's. Very naturally that youth had now risen to the position of popular hero, and unapproachable seniors slapped him warmly on the shoulder—a bit of familiarity Joel was too good-natured to resent—and wide-eyed little juniors admired him open-mouthed as he passed them. But Joel bore himself modestly withal, and was in no danger of being spoiled by a state of things that might well have turned the head of a more experienced lad than he. It is a question if Outfield did not derive more real pleasure and pride out of Joel's popularity than did Joel himself. Every new evidence of the liking and admiration in which the latter was held filled Outfield's heart with joy.

At last Joel found time to begin his course in golf, and almost any day the two lads might have been seen on the links, formidably armed with a confusing assortment of clubs, Outfield quite happy to be exhibiting the science of his favorite sport, and Joel plowing up the sod in a way to cause a green-tender, had there been such a person on hand, the most excruciating pain. But Joel went at golf as he went at everything else, bending all his energies thereto, and driving thought of all else from his mind, and so soon became, if not an expert, at least a very acceptable player who won

commendation from even West—and where golf was concerned Outfield was a most unbiased and unsympathetic judge.

One afternoon Whipple and Blair, the latter once more free from probation, played a match with Joel and West, and were fairly beaten by three holes—a fact due less, it is true, to Joel's execution with the driver than West's all-around playing. But Joel, nevertheless, derived not a little encouragement from that result, and bade fair to become almost if not quite as enthusiastic a golfer as West. At first, in the earlier stages of his initiation, Joel was often discouraged, whereupon West was wont to repeat the famous reply of the old St. Andrews player to the college professor, who did not understand why, when he could teach Latin and Greek, he failed so dismally at golf. "Ay, I ken well ye can teach the Latin and Greek," said the veteran, "but it takes *brains*, mon, to play the gowf!" And Joel more than half agreed with him.

Remsen departed a week after Thanksgiving, being accompanied to the train by almost as enthusiastic a throng as had welcomed him upon his arrival. He had consented to return to Hillton the following year and coach the eleven once more. "I had expected to make this the last year," he said, "but now I shall coach, if you will have me, until we win a decisive victory from St. Eustace. I can't break off my coaching career with a tie game, you see." And Christie occasioned laughter and applause by replying, "I'm

afraid you're putting a premium on defeat, sir, because if we win next year's game you won't come back." He shook hands cordially with Joel, and said:

"When the election of next year's captain comes off, my boy, it's a pretty sure thing that you'll have a chance at it. But if you'll take my advice you'll let it alone. I tell you this because I'm your friend all through. Next fall will be time enough for the honors; this year should go to hard work without any of the trouble that falls to the lot of captain."

"Thank you, Mr. Remsen," Joel answered. "I hadn't thought of their doing such a thing. I don't see why they should want me. But if it's offered you may be sure I'll decline. I'd be totally unfitted for it; and, besides, I haven't got the time!"

And so, when two weeks later the election was held in the gymnasium one evening, Joel did decline, to the evident regret of all the team, and the honor went to Christie, since both Blair and Whipple were seniors and would not be in school the next autumn. And Christie made a very manly, earnest speech, and subsequently called for three times three for Blair, and three times three for Remsen, and nine times three for Hillton, all of which were given with a will.

As the Christmas recess approached, Joel spent a great deal of valuable time in unnecessary conjecture as to his chance of winning the Goodwin scholarship, and undoubtedly lessened his chance of success by worrying. The

winners were each year announced in school hall on the last day of the term. The morning of that day found Outfield West very busy packing a heap of unnecessary golf clubs and wearing apparel into his trunk and bags, and found Joel seated rather despondently on the lounge looking on. For West was to spend his vacation with an uncle in Boston, and Joel, although Outfield had begged him to go along, asserting positively that his uncle would be proud and happy to see him (Joel), was to spend the recess at school, since he felt he could not afford the expense of the trip home. West hesitated long over a blue-checked waistcoat and at length sighed and left it out.

"Isn't it most time to go over?" asked Joel.

"No; don't you be in a hurry. There's a half hour yet. And if you're going to get the Goodwin you'll get it, and there isn't any use stewing over it," replied West severely. "As for me, I'm glad I'm not a grind and don't have to bother my head about such tommyrot. Just sit on the lid of this pesky thing, Joel, will you? I'm afraid that last coat was almost too much for it."

But even suspense comes to an end, and presently Joel found himself seated by West in the crowded hall, and felt his face going red and pale by turns, and knew that his heart was beating with unaccustomed violence beneath his shabby vest. Professor Wheeler made his speech—and what a long one it seemed to many a lad!—and then the fateful list was lifted from the table.

"Senior class scholarships have been awarded as follows," announced the principal. "The Calvin scholarship to Albert Park Digbee, Waltham, Massachusetts." Joel forgot his unpleasant emotions while he clapped and applauded. But they soon returned as the list went on. Every announcement met with uproarous commendation, and boy after boy arose from his seat and more or less awkwardly bowed his recognition. The principal had almost completed the senior list.

"Ripley scholarships to George Simms Lennox, New York city; John Fiske, Brookville, Mississippi; Carleton Sharp Eaton, Milton, Massachusetts; William George Woodruff, Portland, Maine. Masters scholarships to Howard McDonnell, Indianapolis, Indiana; Thomas Grey, Yonkers, New York; Stephen Lutger Williams, Connellsville, Rhode Island; Barton Hobbs, Farmington, Maine; Walter Haskens Browne, Denver, Colorado; and Justin Thorp Smith, Chicago, Illinois."

Joel's hands were cold and his feet just wouldn't keep still. The principal leaned down and took up the upper middle class list. West nudged Joel smartly in the ribs, and whispered excitedly:

"Now! Keep cool, my boy, keep cool!"

Then Joel heard Professor Wheeler's voice reading from the list, and for a moment it seemed to come from a great distance.

"Upper middle class scholarships have been awarded as follows:" There was a pause while he found his place.

"Goodwin scholarship to Harold Burke Reeves, Saginaw, Michigan."

West subsided in his seat with a dismal groan. Joel did not hear it. It is doubtful if he heard anything until several minutes later, when the pronouncement of his name awoke him from the lethargy into which he had fallen.

"Masters scholarships to Joel March, Marchdale, Maine——"

"It's better than nothing, Joel," whispered Outfield. "It's fifty dollars, you know." But Joel made no reply. What was a Masters to him who had set his heart on the first prize of all? Presently, when the lists were over, he stole quietly out unnoticed by his chum, and when West returned to the room he found Joel at the table, head in hands, an open book before him. West closed the door and walked noiselessly forward in the manner of one in a sick-room. At length he asked in a voice which strove to be natural and unconcerned:

"What are you doing, Joel?"

The head over the book only bent closer as its owner answered doggedly:

"Studying Greek!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE BOAT RACE.

The balance of that school year was a season of hard study for Joel. It was not in his nature to remain long despondent over the loss of the Goodwin scholarship, and a week after the winter term commenced he was as cheerful and light-hearted as ever. But his failure served to spur him on to renewed endeavors, and as a result he soon found himself at the head of the upper middle. Rightly or wrongly—and there is much to be said on both sides—he gave up sports almost entirely. Now and then West persuaded him to an afternoon on the links, but this was infrequent. The hockey season opened with the first hard ice on the river, and West joined the team that met and defeated St. Eustace in January. There was one result of his application to study that Joel had not looked for. Outfield West, perhaps from a mere desire to be companionable, took to lessons, and, much to his own pretended dismay, began to earn the reputation of a diligent student.

"You won't talk," growled West, "you won't play chess, you won't eat things. You just drive a chap to study!"

As spring came in the school talk turned to baseball and rowing. For the former Joel had little desire, but rowing attracted him, and he began to allow himself the unusual pleasure of an hour away from lessons in the afternoon that he might go down to the boathouse with West, and there, in a sunny angle of the building, watch the crews at work upon the stream. Hillton was trying very hard to turn out a winning crew, and Whipple, who was captain of the first eight, toiled as no captain had toiled before in the history of Hillton aquatics.

The baseball season ended disastrously with a severe drubbing for the Hillton nine at the hands of St. Eustace on the latter's home ground. The fellows said little, but promised to atone for it when the boat race came off. This occurred two days before class day, which this year came on June 22d, and very nearly every pupil traveled down the river to Marshall to witness it. The day away from school came as a welcome relief after the worry and brain-aching of the spring examination, and Joel, although he knew for a certainty that he had passed with the highest marks, was glad to obey Outfield's stern decree and accompany that youth to the scene of the race.

They went by train and arrived at the little town at noon. After a regal repast of soup and sandwiches, ice cream and chocolate éclairs, the two set out for the river side. The Hillton crew had come down the day before with their new shell, and had spent the night at the only hotel in the village.

The race was to be started at three, and West and Joel spent the intervening time in exploring the river banks for a mile in each direction from the bridge, and in getting their feet wet and their trousers muddy.

By the hour set for the start the river sides were thronged with spectators, and rival cheers floated across the sparkling stream from bank to bank. That side of the river whereon St. Eustace Academy lies hidden behind a hill held the St. Eustace supporters, while upon the other bank the Hillton lads and their friends congregated. But the long bridge, something more than a mile below, was common ground, and here the foes mingled and strove to outshout each other.

The river is broad here below Marshall, and forms what is almost a basin, hemmed in on either side by low wooded bluffs. From where Joel and West, with a crowd of Hillton fellows, stood midway upon the bridge, the starting point, nearly a mile and a half up stream was plainly visible, and the finish line was a few rods above them. West was acquainted with several of the St. Eustace boys, and to these Joel was introduced and was welcomed by them with much cordiality and examined with some curiosity. He had accomplished the defeat of their Eleven, and they would know what sort of youth he was.

While they were talking, leaning against the railing of the bridge, Joel suddenly caught West's arm and drew his attention to a boy some distance away who was looking toward

the starting point through a pair of field glasses. West indulged in a long whistle, plainly indicative of amazement.

"Who's that fellow over there?" he asked. One of the St. Eustace boys followed the direction of his gaze.

"Well, you ought to know him. He knows you. That's Bartlett Cloud. He was at Hillton last term, and left because he was put off the Eleven; or so he says."

"Humph!" ejaculated Outfield West. "He left to keep from being expelled, he did. He left because he was mixed up in some mighty dirty work, and knew that, even if they let him stay in school, no decent fellow would associate with him. And you can tell him from me that if he says I know him he's a liar. I don't know him from—from mud! I should think you'd be proud of him at Eustace."

"We didn't know that," answered the St. Eustace boy in perplexity. "We thought——"

"What?" demanded West as the other paused.

"Well, he said that the coach was down on him, and gave his place to your friend here, and——"

"No," answered Joel quietly. "I didn't take his place. He tried to strike me one day at practice, and Remsen, our coach, put him off. That was all. Afterward he—he— But it isn't worth talking about."

"But I didn't know that St. Eustace made a practice of taking in cast-off scamps from other schools," said West. The other lad flushed as he answered apologetically:

"We didn't know, West. He said he was a friend of

yours and so— But the other fellows shall know about him." Then there was a stir on the bridge and a voice cried, "There they go to the float!"

Up the stream at the starting point two shells were seen leisurely paddling toward a float anchored a few yards off the right bank. The colors were easily distinguishable, and especially did the crimson of Hillton show up to the eager watchers on the bridge. Every eye was turned toward the two boats, and a silence held the throng, a silence which lasted until sixteen oar-blades caught the water almost together, and the two boats began to leave the float behind. Then cries of "They're off!" were raised, and there was a general shoving and pushing for places of observation on the up-stream side of the structure, while along the banks the crowds began to move about again.

It was Joel's first sight of a boat race, and he found himself becoming very excited, while West, veteran though he was, breathed a deal faster, and talked in disjointed monosyllables.

"Side by side! . . . No, Hillton's ahead! . . . Isn't she? . . . Eh? . . . You can't . . . see from here . . . which is . . . leading. . . . Get another hold on my . . . arm, . . . Joel; that one's black . . . and blue! . . . Hillton's ahead! Hillton's ahead by a half length!"

But she wasn't. Side by side the two shells swept on toward the first half-mile mark. They were both rowing steadily, with no endeavor to draw away, Hillton at thirty

strokes, St. Eustace at thirty-two. The course was two miles, almost straight away down the river. The half-mile buoy was not distinguishable from where Joel stood, but the mile was plainly in sight. Some one who held a stop-watch behind Joel uttered an impatient growl at the slow time the crews were making.

"There'll be no record broken to-day," he said. "They're eight seconds behind already for the first quarter."

But Joel didn't care about that. If only those eight swaying forms might pass first beyond the finish line he cared but little what the time might be. The cheering, which had ceased as the boats left the start, now began again as they approached the finish of the first quarter of the course.

"Rah-rah-rah; rah-rah-rah; rah-rah-rah, Hillton!" rang out from the right bank.

"S, E, A; S, E, A; S, E, A; Saint Eustace!" replied the left bank with a defiant roar of sound that was caught by the hills and flung back in echoes across the water. "Saint Eustace! Saint Eustace! Saint Eustace!" "Hillton! Hillton! Hillton!"

Then the cheering grew louder and more frenzied as, boat to boat, the rival eights passed the half-mile buoy, swinging along with no perceptible effort over the blue, dancing water.

"Anybody's race," said Outfield West, as he lowered his glasses. "But Hillton's got the outside course on the turn." The turn was no more than a slight divergence from the straight line at the one-mile mark, but it might mean from

a half to three quarters of a length to the outside boat should they maintain their present relative positions. For the next half mile the same moderate strokes were used until the half-course buoy was almost reached, when Hillton struck up to thirty-two and then to thirty-four, and St. Eustace increased her stroke to the latter number. It was a race for the position nearest the buoy, and St. Eustace won it, Hillton falling back a half length as the course was changed. Then the strokes in both boats went back to thirty-two, Hillton seemingly willing to keep in the rear. On and on they came, the oars taking the water in unison, and shining like silver when the sun caught the wet blades. And back, the wakes seemed like two ruled marks, so straight they were. There was no let up of the cheering now. Back and forth went challenge and reply across the stream, while the watchers on the bridge fairly shook that iron-trussed structure with the fury of their slogans.

As the boats neared the three-quarter buoy it was plain to all who looked that the real race was yet to come. Hillton suddenly hit up her stroke to thirty-four, to thirty-six, to thirty-eight, and, a bit ragged perhaps, but nevertheless at a beautiful speed, drew up to St. Eustace, shoved her nose a quarter length past, and hung there, despite St. Eustace's best efforts to shake her off.

Both boats were now straining their uttermost, and from now on to the finish it was to be the stiffest rowing of which each was capable. Hillton *was* ragged on the port side, and

bow was plainly tuckered. But St. Eustace also showed signs of wear, and there was an evident disposition the length of the boat to hurry through the stroke. Joel was straining his eyes on the crimson backs, and West was vainly and unconsciously endeavoring to see through the glasses from the wrong end. The three-quarter mark swept past the boats, and Hillton still maintained her lead.

The judges' boat, a tiny, saucy naphtha launch, had steamed down to the finish, and now quivered there as though from impatience and excitement, and awaited the victor. Suddenly there was a groan of dismay from the St. Eustace supporters. And no wonder. Their boat had suddenly dropped behind until its nose was barely lapping the rival shell. Number Four was rowing "out of time and tune," as Joel shouted triumphantly, and although he soon steadied down, the damage was hard to repair, for Hillton, encouraged by the added lead, was rowing magnificently.

But with strokes that brought cries of admiration even from her foes St. Eustace struggled gloriously to recover her lost water. Little by little the nose of her boat crept up and up, until it was almost abreast with Number Three's oar, while cries of encouragement from bridge and shore urged her on. But now Green, the Hillton coxswain, turned his head slightly, studied the position of the rival eight, glanced ahead at the judges' boat, and spoke a short, sharp command.

And instantly, ragged port oars notwithstanding, the crimson crew seemed to lift their boat from the water at

every stroke, and St. Eustace, struggling gamely, heroically, to the last moment, fell farther and farther behind. A half length of clear water showed between them, then a length, then—and now the line was but a stone-throw away—two fair lengths separated the contestants. And amid the deafening, frenzied shrieks of their schoolmates, their crimson-clad backs rising and falling like clock-work, all signs of raggedness gone, the eight heroes swept over the line winners by two and a half lengths from the St. Eustace crew, and disappeared under the bridge to emerge on the other side with trailing oars and wearied limbs.

And as they went from sight, Joel, stooping, yelling, over the railing, saw, with the piercing shriek of the launch's whistle in his ears, the upraised face of Green, the coxswain, smiling placidly up at him.

CHAPTER XVI.

GOOD-BY TO HILLTON.

Joel took the preliminary examination for Harwell University in June, and left class day morning for home. He had the satisfaction of seeing his name in the list of honor men for the year, having attained A or B in all studies for the three terms. The parting with Outfield West was shorn of much of its melancholy by reason of the latter's promise to visit Joel in August. The suggestion had been made by Outfield, and Joel had at once warmly pressed him to come.

"Only, you know, Out," Joel had said, "we don't live in much style. And I have to work a good deal, so there won't be much time for fun."

"What do you have to do?" asked West.

"Well, milk, and go to mill, and perhaps there will be threshing to do before I leave. And then there's lots of other little things around the farm that I generally do when I'm home."

"That's all right," answered West cheerfully. "I'll help. I milked a cow once. Only— Say, what do you hit a cow with when you milk her?"

"I don't hit her at all," laughed Joel. "Do you?"

"I *did*. I hit her with a plank and she up and kicked me eight times before I could move off. Perhaps I riled her. I thought you should always hit them before you begin."

Joel had not seen his parents since he had left home in the preceding fall, and naturally a warm welcome awaited him. Mr. March, to Joel's relief, did not appear to regret the loss of the Goodwin scholarship nearly as much as Joel himself had done, and seemed rather proud than otherwise of the lad's first year at the Academy.

In August Outfield West descended at the little station accompanied by two trunks, a golf-bag, a photograph camera, and a dress-suit case; and Farmer March regarded the pile of luggage apprehensively, and undoubtedly thought many unflattering thoughts of West. But as no one could withstand that youth for long, at the end of three days both Joel's father and mother had accepted him unreservedly into their hearts. As for Joel's brother Ezra, and his twelve-year-old sister, they had never hesitated for a single instant.

Mr. March absolutely forbade Joel from doing any of the chores after West arrived at the farm, and sent the boys off on a week's hunting and fishing excursion with Black Betty and the democrat wagon. West took his camera along, but was prevailed on to leave his golf clubs at the farm; and the two had eight days of ideal fun in the Maine woods, and

returned home with marvelous stories of adventure and a goodly store of game and fish.

West was somewhat disappointed in the golfing facilities afforded by the country about Marchdale, but politely refrained from allowing the fact to be known by Joel. Outside of the " pasture " and the " hill-field " the ground was too rocky and broken to make driving a pleasure, and after losing half a dozen balls Outfield restricted himself to the pasture, where he created intense interest on the part of the cows. He found that he got along much more peaceably with them when he appeared without his red coat.

In September, happy, healthy, and well browned, the two boys returned to Hillton with all the dignity becoming the reverend Senior. West had abandoned his original intention of entering Yates College, and had taken with Joel the preliminary examination for Harwell; and they were full of great plans for the future, and spent whole hours telling each other what marvelous things awaited them at the university.

Joel's Senior year at Hillton was crowded with hard work and filled with incident. But, as it was more or less a repetition of the preceding year, it must needs be told of briefly. If space permitted I should like to tell of Joel's first debate in the Senior Debating Society, in which he proved conclusively and to the satisfaction of all present that the Political Privileges of a Citizen of Athens under the Constitution of Cleisthenes were far superior to those

of a Citizen of Rome at the Time of the Second Punic War. And I should like to tell of the arduous training on the football field and in the gymnasium, by means of which Joel increased his sphere of usefulness on the Eleven, and learned to run with the ball as well as kick it, so proving the truth of an assertion made by Stephen Remsen, who had said, "With such long legs as those, March, you should be as fine a runner as you are a kicker."

And I should like to go into tiresome detail over the game with St. Eustace, in which Joel made no star plays, but worked well and steadily at the position of left half-back, and thereby aided in the decisive victory for Hillton that Remsen had spoken of; for the score at the end of the first half was, Hillton 5, St. Eustace 0; and at the end of the game, Hillton 11, St. Eustace 0.

Joel and Remsen became fast and familiar friends during that term, and when, a few days after the St. Eustace game, Remsen took his departure from the Academy, no more to coach the teams to glorious victory or honorable defeat, Joel of all the school was perhaps the sorriest to have him go. But Remsen spoke hopefully of future meetings at Harwell, and Joel and West waved him farewell from the station platform and walked back to the yard in the manner of chief mourners at a funeral.

Outfield West again emerged triumphant from the golf tournament, and the little pewter mug remained securely upon his mantel, a receptacle for damaged balls. For some

time the two missed the familiar faces of Digbee and Blair and Whipple and some few others. Somers and Cooke still remained, the latter with radiant hopes of graduation the coming June, the former to take advanced courses in several studies. Clausen was a frequent visitor to Number Four Hampton, and both West and Joel had conceived a liking for him which, as the year went by, grew into sincere friendship. Those who had been intimate with Wallace Clausen when he was under the influence of Bartlett Cloud saw a great difference in the lad at this period. He had grown manlier, more earnest in tone and attainments, and had apparently shaken off his old habit of weak carelessness as some insects shed their skins. He, too, was to enter Harwell the coming fall, a fact which strengthened the bond between the three youths.

One resolve was uppermost in Joel's heart when he began his last year at Hillton, and that was to gain the Goodwin scholarship. His failure the year before had only strengthened his determination to win this time; and win he did, and was a very proud and happy lad when the lists were read and the name of "Joel March, Marchdale, Maine," led all the rest. And it is to be supposed that there was much happiness in the great rambling snow-covered farmhouse up north when Joel's telegram was received; for Joel could not wait for the mail to carry the good news, but must needs run at once to the village and spend a bit of his prospective fortune on a "night message."

Despite this fortune of two hundred and forty dollars, Joel elected to spend his Christmas holidays again at Hillton, and Outfield, when he learned of the intention, declined his uncle's invitation and remained also. The days passed quickly and merrily. There was excellent skating on the river, and Joel showed West the methods of ice-fishing, though with but small results of a finny nature.

Cicero's Orations gave place to De Senectute, the Greek Testament to Herodotus, and Plane Geometry to Solid; and spring found Joel with two honor terms behind him, and as sure as might be of passing his final examination for college.

Again in June St. Eustace and Hillton met on the river, and, as though to atone for her defeat on the gridiron, Fate gave the victory to St. Eustace, the wearers of the blue crossing the finish a full length ahead of the Hillton eight. The baseball team journeyed down to Marshall and won by an overwhelming majority of runs, and journeyed home again in the still of a June evening, bringing another soiled and battered ball to place in the trophy case of the gymnasium.

And finally, one bright day in early summer, Joel put on his best clothes and, accompanied by West and Clausen, took his way to the chapel, where, amid an eloquent silence, Professor Wheeler made his farewell address, and old, gray-haired Dr. Temple preached the Valedictory Sermon. Then the diplomas were presented, and, save for the senior class exercises in the school hall in the afternoon,

Class Day was over, and Joel March's school days were past. Joel was graduated at the head of the class, an honor man once more; and Outfield West, greatly to every one's amazement, not excepting his own, was also on the honor list. Cooke passed at last, and later confided to West that he didn't know what he'd do now that they wouldn't let him stay longer at Hillton; he was certain he would feel terribly homesick at Harwell. West playfully suggested that he stay at Hillton and take an advanced course, and Cooke seemed quite in the notion until he found that he would be obliged to make the acquaintance of both Livy and Horace.

A lad can not stay two years at a school without becoming deeply attached to it, and both Joel and West took their departures from Hillton feeling very melancholy as the wooded hill, crowned by the sun-lit tower, faded from sight. West went directly to his home, although Joel had tried to persuade him to visit at Marchdale for a few weeks. In July Joel received a letter from Outfield asking him to visit him in Iowa, and, at the solicitation of his parents, he decided to accept the invitation. The West was terra incognita to Joel, and he found much to interest and puzzle him. The methods of farming were so different from those to which he had been accustomed that he spent the first week of his stay in trying to revolutionize them, much to the amusement of both Outfield and his father. He at length learned that Eastern ways are not Western ways, and so became content to see wheat

harvested by machinery and corn cultivated with strange, new implements.

He received one day a letter forwarded from Marchdale which bore the signature of the captain of the Harwell Varsity Football Eleven. It asked him to keep in practice during the summer, and, if convenient, to report on the field two days before the commencement of the term. Remsen's name was mentiond and Joel knew that he had him to thank for the letter.

The friends had decided to take a room together, and had applied for one in the spring. Much to their gratification they were given a third floor room in Mayer, one of the best of the older college dormitories. When the time came for going East both West and Joel were impatient to be on the way. Mrs. West accompanied the boys, and the little party reached the old, elm-embowered college town four days before the opening of the term. Agreeably to the request of the football captain, Joel reported on the field in football togs the day after reaching town, and was given a cordial welcome. Captain Dutton was not there, but returned with the Varsity squad from a week's practice at a neighboring village two days later.

Mrs. West meanwhile toiled ceaselessly at furnishing the boys' room, and the result was a revelation to Joel, to whom luxurious lounges and chairs, and attractive engravings, were things hitherto admired and longed for from a distance. And then, bidding a farewell to the lads, Outfield's mother took

her departure for home, and they were left practically rulers of all they surveyed, and, if the truth were told, a trifle sobered by the suddenness of their plunge into independence.

And one warm September day the college bell rang for chapel and the two lads had begun a new, important, and to them exciting chapter of their lives.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SACRED ORDER OF HULLABALOOLOO.

PICTURE a mild, golden afternoon in early October, the yellowing green of Sailors' Field mellow and warm in the sunlight, the river winding its sluggish way through the broad level marshes like a ribbon of molten gold, and the few great fleecy bundles of white clouds sailing across the deep blue of the sky like froth upon some placid stream. Imagine a sound of fresh voices, mellowed by a little distance, from where, to and fro, walking, trotting, darting, but ever moving like the particles in a kaleidoscope, many squads of players were practicing on the football field. Such, then, is the picture that would have rewarded your gaze had you passed through the gate and stood near the simple granite shaft which rises under the shade of the trees to commemorate the little handful of names it bears.

Had you gone on across the intervening turf until the lengthened shadow of the nearest goal post was reached you would have seen first a squad—a veritable awkward squad—arranged in a ragged circle and passing a football with much mishandling and many fumbles. Further along you would

have seen a long line of youths standing. Their general expression was one of alertness bordering on alarm. The casual observer would have thought each and every one insane, as, suddenly darting from the line, one after another, they flung themselves upon the ground, rolled frantically about as though in spasms, and then arose and went back into the rank. But had you observed carefully you would have noticed that each spasm was caused by a rolling ball, wobbling its erratic way across the turf before them.

Around about, in and out, forms darted after descending spheroids, or seized a ball from outstretched hands, started desperately into motion, charged a few yards, and then, as though reconsidering, turned and trotted back, only to repeat the performance the next moment. And footballs banged against broad backs with hollow sounds, or rolled about between stoutly clad feet, or ascended into the air in great arching flights. And a babel of voices was on all sides, cries of warning, sharp commands, scathing denouncements.

"Straighten your arm, man; that's not a baseball!" "Faster, faster! Put some ginger into it!" "Get on your toes, Smith. Start when you see the ball coming. This isn't a funeral!" "Don't stoop for the ball; fall on it! The ground will catch you!" "Jones, what *are* you doing? Wake up." "No, *no*, NO! Great Scott, the ball won't *bite* you!"

The period was that exasperating one known as "the first two weeks," when coaches are continually upon the border

of insanity and players wonder dumbly if the game is worth the candle. To-day Joel, one of a squad of unfortunates, was relearning the art of tackling. It was Joel's first experience with that marvelous contrivance, "the dummy." One after another the squad was sent at a sharp spurt to grapple the inanimate canvas-covered bag hanging inoffensively there, like a body from a gallows, between the uprights.

There are supposed to be two ways to tackle, but the coach who was conducting the operations to-day undoubtedly believed in the existence of at least thrice that number; for each candidate for Varsity honors tackled the dummy in a totally different style. The lift tackle is performed by seizing the opponent around the legs below the hips, bringing his knees together so that further locomotion is an impossibility to him, and lifting him upward off the ground and depositing him as far backward toward his own goal as circumstances and ability will permit. The lift tackle is the easiest to make. The dive tackle pertains to swimming and suicide. Running toward the opponent, the tackler leaves the ground when at a distance of a length and a half and dives at the runner, aiming to tackle a few inches below the hips. A dive tackle well done always accomplishes a well-defined pause in the runner's progress.

Joel was having hard work of it. Time and again he launched himself at the swaying legs, bringing the canvas man to earth, but always picking himself up to find the coach observing him very, very coldly, and to hear that ex-

asperating gentleman ask sarcastically if he (Joel) thinks he is playing "squat tag." And then the dummy would swing back into place, harboring no malice or resentment for the rough handling, and Joel would take his place once more and watch the next man's attempt, finding, I fear, some consolation in the "roast" accorded to the latter.

It was toward the latter part of the second week of college. Joel had practiced every day except Sundays, and had just arrived at the conclusion that football as played at Harwell was no relation, not even a distant cousin to the game of a similar name played at Hillton. Of course he was wrong, since intercollegiate football, whether played by schoolboys or college students, is still intercollegiate football. The difference lies only in the state of development. At Hillton the game, very properly, was restricted to its more primary methods; at Harwell it is developed to its uttermost limits. It is the difference between whist over the library table and whist at the whist club.

But all things come to an end, and at length the coach rather ungraciously declared he could stand no more and bade them join the rest of the candidates for the run. That run was two miles, and Joel finally stumbled into the gymnasium tuckered out and in no very good temper just as the five o'clock whistle on the great printing house sounded.

After dinner in the dining hall that evening Joel confided his doubts and vexations to Outfield as they walked back to their room. "I wouldn't care if I thought I was making

any progress," he wailed, "but each day it gets worse. To-day I couldn't seem to do a start right, and as for tackling that old dummy, why——"

"Well, you did as well as the other chaps, didn't you?" asked Outfield.

"I suppose so. He gave it to us all impartially."

"Well, there you are. He can't tell you you're the finest young tacklers that ever happened, because you'd all get swelled craniums and not do another lick of work. I know the sort of fellow he is. He'll never tell you that you are doing well; only when he's satisfied with you he'll pass you on. You see. And don't you care what he says. Just go on and do the best you know how. Blair told me to-day that if you tried you could make the Varsity before the season is over. What do you think of that? He says the coaches are puzzling their brains to find a man that's fit to take the place of Dangfield, who was left-half last year."

"I dare say," answered Joel despondently, "but Durston will never let me stop tackling that dummy arrangement. I'll be taking falls out of it all by myself when the Yates game is going on. Who invented that thing, anyhow?"

But, nevertheless, Joel's spirits were very much better when the two lads reached the room and West had turned on the soft light of the argand. And taking their books in hand, and settling comfortably back in the two great cozy armchairs, they were soon busily reading.

Hazing has "gone out" at Harwell, and so, when at

about nine the two boys heard many footfalls outside their door, and when in response to West's loud "Come" five mysterious and muffled figures in black masks entered they were somewhat puzzled what to think.

"March?" asked a deep voice.

"Yes," answered Joel with a wondering frown.

"West?"

"Yep. What in thunder do you want? And who in thunder are you?"

"Freshies, aren't you?" continued the inexorable voice. The maskers had closed and locked the door behind them, and now stood in rigid inquisitorial postures between it and the table.

"None of your business," answered West crossly. "Get out, will you?"

"Not until our duties are done," answered the mask. "You are freshies, nice, new, tender little freshies. We are here to initiate you into the mysteries of the Sacred Order of Hullabalooloo. Stand up!" Neither moved; they were already standing, West puzzled and angry, Joel wondering and amused.

"Well, sit down, then," commanded the voice. Joel looked meaningly at Outfield, and as the latter nodded the two rushed at the members of the Sacred Order of Hullabalooloo. But the latter were prepared. Over went the nearest armchair, down from the wall with a clatter came a rack of books, and this way and that swayed the forms of the

maskers and the two roommates. The battle was short but decisive, and when it was done, Joel lay gasping on the floor and Outfield sprawled breathless on the couch.

"Will you give up?" asked the first mask.

"Yes," growled West, and Joel echoed him.

"Then you may get up," responded the mask. "But, mind you, no tricks!" Joel thought he heard the sound of muffled laughter from one of the masks as he arose and arranged his damaged attire. "Freshman March will favor us with a song," announced the mask.

"I can't sing a word," answered Joel.

"You must. Hullabalooloo decrees it."

"Then Hullabalooloo can come and make me," retorted Joel stubbornly.

"What," asked the mask in a deep, grewsome voice, "what is the penalty for disobedience?"

"Tossed in the blanket," answered the other four in unison.

"You hear, Freshman March?" asked the mask. "Choose."

"I'll sing, I guess," answered Joel, with a grin. But West jumped up.

"Don't you do it, Joel! They can't make you sing! And they can't make me sing; and the first one that comes in reach will get knocked down!"

"Oh, well, I don't mind singing," answered Joel. "That

is, I don't mind trying. If they can stand it, I can. What shall I sing?"

"What do you know?"

"I only know one song. I'll sing that, but on one condition."

"Name it?" answered the mask.

"That you'll join in and sing the chorus."

There was a moment of hesitation; then the masks nodded, and Joel mounted to a chair and with a comical grimace of despair at West, who sat scowling on the couch, he began:

"'There is a flag of crimson hue,
The fairest flag that flieth,
Whose folds wave over hearts full true,
As nobody denieth.
Here's to the School, the School so dear;
Here's to the soil it's built on!
Here's to the heart, or far or near,
That loves the Flag of Hillton.'"

Joel was not much of a singer, but his voice was good and he sang as though he meant it. Outfield sat unresponsive until the verse was nearly done; then he moved restlessly and waited for the chorus, and when it came joined in with the rest; and the strains of Hilltonians rang triumphantly through the building.

"Hilltonians, Hilltonians, your crimson banner fling
Unto the breeze, and 'neath its folds your anthem loudly sing!
Hilltonians, Hilltonians, our loyalty we'll prove
Beneath the flag, the crimson flag, the bonny flag we love!"

The Knights of the Sacred Order of Hullabalooloo signified their approval and demanded the next verse. And Joel sang it. And when the chorus came the maskers lost much of their dignity and waved their arms about and shouted the refrain so loud that doors up and down the hall opened and wondering voices shouted "Shut up!" or "More! M-o-r-e!" for two minutes after. As the last word was reached Joel leaned quickly forward toward an unsuspicious singer, and, snatching the mask from his face, revealed the countenance of Louis Whipple.

And then, amid much laughter, the other masks were slipped off, and the remaining members of the Sacred Order of Hullabalooloo stood revealed as Blair, Cartwright, Somers, and Cooke.

And Outfield, joining in the laugh at his own expense, was seized by Cooke and waltzed madly around the table, while the rest once more raised the strains of Hilltonians:

"Hilltonians, Hilltonians, your crimson banner fling
Unto the breeze, and 'neath its folds your anthem loudly sing!
Hilltonians, Hilltonians, we stand to do or die,
Beneath the flag, the crimson flag, that waves for victory!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

VISITORS FROM MARCHDALE.

DESPITE Joel's dark forebodings, he was at last released from tackling practice. And with that moment he began to take hope for better things. Under the charge of Kent, one of the coaches and an old Harwell half, Joel was instructed in catching punts till his arms ached and his eyes watered, and in kicking until he seemed to be one-sided. Starting with the ball he no longer dreaded, since he had mastered that science and could now delight the coach by leaping from a stand as though shot from the mouth of a cannon.

Signals he had no trouble with. His memory was excellent, and he possessed the faculty of rapid computation; though as yet his brain had been but little taxed, since the practice code was still in use. At the end of the third week both Varsity and scrub teams were at length selected, and Joel, to his delight, found himself playing left-half on the latter. Two match games a week was now the rule for the Varsity, and Joel each Wednesday and Saturday might have been found seated under the fence dividing the gridiron from the grand stand wrapped nearly from sight, if the afternoon

was chilly, in a great gray blanket, and watching the play with all the excited ardor of the veriest schoolboy on the stand behind.

One Saturday Prince, the Varsity left-half, twisted his ankle, and Joel was taken on in his place. They were playing Amherst, and Joel has ever since held that college in high esteem, for that it was against its Eleven he made his *début* into Harwell football life. And how he played! The captain smiled as he watched him prance down the field after a punt, never content to be there in time, but always striving to get there first, and not seldom succeeding. Once he succeeded too well.

It was in the second half. Blair—it was his first year on the team—was playing full-back. On a first down he punted the ball a long and rather low kick into Amherst's territory. Joel bowled over an Amherst end who was foolish enough to get in the way and started down the field like an Indian warrior on the war path. The Harwell ends were a little in advance but off to the sides, and Joel sprinted hard and easily passed them both. Kingdon, the right half, gave him a good run, but he too was passed, and Joel reached the Amherst full-back just as that gentleman turned for the ball, which had passed unexpectedly over his head. The goal line was but thirty yards distant. Joel saw only the full-back, the ball, and the goal line. He forgot everything else. A small cyclone struck the full, and when he picked himself up it was to see a crimson-legged player depositing the

pigskin back of goal and to hear a roar of laughter from the seats!

Then he yelled "Off side!" at the top of his lungs and tore down on Joel, and, much to that young gentleman's surprise, strove to wrest the ball from him. It was quite uncalled for, and Joel naturally resented it to the extent of pushing violently, palms open, against the Amherst man's jacket, with the result that the Amherst gentleman sat down backward forcibly upon the turf at some distance. And again the stands laughed. But Joel gravely lifted the ball and walked back to the thirty-yard line with it. The center took it with a grin, and, as the five yards of penalty for off side was paced, Joel was rewarded for his play with the muttered query from the captain:

"What were you doing, you idiot?"

But too great zeal is far more excusable than too small, and Joel was quickly forgiven, and all the more readily, perhaps, since Amherst was held for downs, and the ball went over on the second next play. But Joel called himself a great many unpleasant names during the rest of the game, and for a long while after could not think of his first touchdown without feeling his cheeks redden. Nevertheless, his manner of getting down the field under kicks undoubtedly impressed the coaches favorably, for when the scrub was further pruned to allow it to go to training table Joel was retained.

One bright October day Joel and Outfield went into town

to meet the former's parents at the station; for Mr. and Mrs. March had long before made up their minds to the visit, and the two boys had been looking forward to it for some time. It was worth going a long way to see the pleasure with which the old farmer and his wife greeted the great long-legged youth who towered so far above them there on the station platform. Joel kissed his mother fondly, patted his father patronizingly but affectionately on the back, and asked fifty questions in as many minutes. And all his mother could do was to gaze at him in reverent admiration and sigh, over and over:

"Land sakes, Joel March, how you do grow!"

It must not be thought that West was neglected. Farmer March, in especial, showed the greatest pleasure at meeting him again, and shook hands with him four times before the street was reached and the car that was to carry them to the college town gained. The boys conducted the visitors to their room, and made lunch for them on a gas stove, Outfield drawing generously on his private larder, situated under the foot of his bed. Then the four hunted up a pleasant room in one of the student boarding houses, and afterward showed the old people through the college.

There was a good deal to see and many questions to answer, since Joel's father was not a man to leave an object of interest until he had learned all there was to be told about it. The elms in the yard were fast losing their yellow leaves, but the grass yet retained much of its verdancy, and as for

the sky, it was as sweetly blue as on the fairest day in spring. Up one side of the yard and down the other went the sight-seers, poking into dark hallways, reading tablets and inscriptions, the latter translated by West into the most startling English, pausing before the bulletins to have the numerous announcements of society and club meetings explained, drinking from the old pump in the corner, and so completing the circuit and storming the gymnasium, where at last Joel's powers of reply were exhausted and Outfield promptly sprang into the breech, explaining gravely that the mattresses on the floor were used by Doctor Major, the director of the gymnasium, who invariably took a cat-nap during the afternoon, that the suspended rings were used to elevate sophomores while corporeal punishment was administered by freshmen, and that the queer little weights in the boxes around the walls were reserve paper weights.

Then the line of march was taken up toward Sailors' Field, where they arrived just in time to see the beginning of the practice game between the Varsity and the scrub. Joel had been excused from attendance that day, and so he took his seat beside the others on the grand stand and strove to elucidate the philosophy of football.

"You see the scrubs have the ball. They must get it past the Varsity down to the end of the field, where they can either put it down over the line or kick it over that cross-piece there. That's center, that fellow that's arranging the ball. He kicks off. There it goes, and a good kick, too.

Sometimes the center-rush isn't a good kicker; then some one else kicks off. Blair has the ball. Look, see him dodge with it. He gained ten yards that time."

"Oh!" It was Joel's mother who exclaimed. "Why, Joel, that other man threw him down."

"That's part of the game, mother. He did that to keep Blair from getting the ball any nearer the scrub's goal. He isn't hurt, you see."

"And do you mean that they do that all the time?"

"Pretty often."

"And do *you* get thrown around that way, Joel?"

"Sometimes, mother; when I'm lucky enough to get the ball."

"Well, I never."

"Football's not a bad game, Mr. March," West was saying. "But it doesn't come up to golf, you know. It's too rough."

"It does look a little rough," answered Mr. March. "Do they often get hurt? Seems as though when a boy had another fellow on his head, and another on his stomach, and another on his feet, and the whole lot of them banging away at once, seems like that boy would be a little uncomfortable."

West laughed.

"Sometimes a fellow has his ankle sprained or a knee twisted, or a shoulder-bone bust, or something like that. But it isn't often anything worse occurs."

"Well, I suppose it's all right then. Only when I was

a boy we never went round trying to get our ankles sprained or our collar-bones broke; you young fellows are tougher than we were, I guess."

"I shouldn't wonder, sir. I believe Joel has been feeling pretty bad for a long time because he's got nothing worse than a broken finger."

"What? Broke his finger, did he? Eh? He didn't write anything about it; what's he mean, getting broken to pieces and not telling his parents about it?" West glanced apprehensively at Joel, but the latter had missed the conversation, being busy following the progress of Barton, of the scrub, who was doing a long run along the side line.

"Well, it wasn't much of a break, sir. It's all right now, and I think he thought you'd be worried, you know. I'm sure if it had been anything important he would have written at once."

"Humph," grunted Joel's father. "If he's going to break himself in pieces he'd better stop football. I won't have him taking risks. I'll tell him so!"

The fifteen-minute half had come to an end, and the players were either resting on the ground or going through some pass or start under the tuition of a coach. Suddenly Joel looked down to see Briscom, the scrub captain, climbing the seats. He ducked his bare head to the others and sank into the seat at Joel's side.

"Look here, March, can you help us out the next half? They've taken Webster on the Varsity, and"—he lowered

his voice to a confidential roar—"we want to make a good showing to-day."

"Of course," answered Joel, "I'll come at once. Can I get some togs from some fellow?"

"Yes. I'll ask Whitman to find some. I'm sorry to take you away from your folks, but it's only fifteen minutes, you know."

So when the whistle blew Joel was at left half-back on the scrub, attired in borrowed plumage that came far from fitting him. And Mrs. March was in a tremor of dismay lest some one should throw Joel down as she had seen Blair thrown. Mr. March had not quite recovered from his resentment over his son's failure to apprise him of the broken finger, which, after all, was only broken in West's imagination, and viewed his advent on the field with disfavor.

Outfield began to wonder if his pleasant fiction regarding Joel's finger was to lead to unpleasant results, when Mr. March relieved his mind somewhat by suddenly taking interest in the career of his son, who was trying to make an end run inside Dutton with half the scrub hauling, pushing, pulling, shoving him along.

"Er—isn't that likely to be bad for that finger of his?"

"Oh, no, sir," answered West. "He looks out for his finger all right enough. There, he made the distance. Bully work. Good old Joel."

"Did he do well then, Mr. West?" asked Joel's mother.

"Of course he did, mother," answered Mr. March disdainfully. "Didn't you see him lugging all those fellows along with him? How much does that count, West?"

"Well, that doesn't score anything, but it helps. The scrub has to pass that line down there before it can score. What they're trying to do now is to get down there, and Joel's helping. You watch him now. I think they're going to give him the ball again for another try around end." West was right in his surmise. Kicks were barred to-day save as a last resort, and the game was favoring the scrub as a consequence. The ball was passed to the right half-back; Joel darted forward like an arrow, took the ball from right, made a quick swerve as he neared the end of the line, and ran outside of the Varsity right end, Captain Dutton, who had been playing pretty well in, in the expectation of another try through tackle-end hole. As Joel got safely by it is more than likely that he found added satisfaction in the feat as he recalled that remark of Dutton's the week before: "What were you doing, you idiot?"

Joel got safely by Dutton, and fooled the sprightly Prince, but very nearly ran into the arms of Kingdon, who missed his tackle by a bare six inches. Then the race began. Joel's path lay straight down by the side line. The field followed him at a distance, and the most he could hope for was a touch-down near the corner of the field, which would require a punt-out.

"Ain't that Joel?" cried Mr. March, forgetting his grammar and his dignity at one and the same moment, and jumping excitedly to his feet. "Ain't that Joel there running? Hey? They can't catch him. I'll lay Joel to outrun the whole blame pack of 'em. Every day, sir. Hey? What?

"I think he's all right, sir, for a touch-down," answered West gayly. "Hello, there's Blair leaving the bunch. Tally-Ho!"

"I don't care if it's a steam-engine," shouted Mr. March, "he can't— I don't know but as he's gaining a little, that fellow. Eh?"

"Looks like it," answered West, while Mrs. March, with her hand on her husband's arm, begged him to sit down and "stop acting so silly."

"Geewhillikins!" cried Mr. March, "Joel's caught! No, he's not—yet—Eh?—Too bad, too bad. Run, Joel, he's got ye!" Suddenly Mr. March, who had almost subsided on his seat, jumped again to his feet.

"Here! Stop that, you fellow! Hi!" He turned angrily to Outfield, his eyes blazing. "What'd he knock him down for? Eh? What's he sitting on my boy for? Is that fair? Eh?"

West and Mrs. March calmed him down and explained that tackling was quite within the law, and that he only sat on him to prevent him from going on again; for Blair had cut short Joel's triumph fifteen yards from the goal line, and

the spectators of the soul-stirring dash down the field were slowly settling again in their seats. Mr. March was presently relieved to see Joel arise, shake himself like a dog coming out of water, and trot back to his position.

Another five minutes, during which the scrub tried desperately to force the ball over the Varsity's goal line, but without success, and the match was over, and Briscom was happy; for the Varsity had scored but once, and that on a fumble by the scrub quarter-back. Joel trotted off with the teams for a shower and a rub-down, and West conducted his parents back to the gate, where they awaited him. On the way Mr. March confided to West that "football wasn't what he'd call a parlor game, but on the whole it appeared to be rather interesting."

In the evening the quartet went into town to the theater and Joel's mother cried happily over the homely pathos of The Old Homestead, and Outfield laughed uproariously upon the slightest provocation, and every one was extremely happy. And afterward they "electriced" back to college, as West put it, and the two boys stayed awake very, very late, laughing and giggling over the humors of the play and Joel's broken finger.

Mr. and Mrs. March left the next day at noon, and Joel accompanied them to the depot, West having a golf engagement which he could not break. And when good-by had been said, and the long train had disappeared from sight, Joel returned to college on foot, over the long bridge spanning the

river, busy with craft, past the factories noisy with the buzz of wheels and the clang of iron, and on along the far-stretching avenue until the tower of the dining hall loomed above the tops of the autumn branches, entering the yard just as the two o'clock bell was ringing.

CHAPTER XIX.

A VARSITY SUB.

Give a boy the name of being a hero and it will stick. Joel was still pointed out by admiring Hillton graduates to their friends at Harwell as "March, the fellow who kicked the winning goal-from-field in the St. Eustace game two years ago." And while Joel had performed of late no doughty deed to sustain his reputation for valor, the freshman class accepted him in all faith as a sort of class hero, off duty for the moment, perchance, but ever ready to shed glory upon the class by some soul-stirring act.

Consequently when it was told through college that Joel March had been taken on to the Varsity Eleven as substitute left half-back no one was surprised, unless it was Joel himself. The freshman class wagged its head knowingly and said: "I told you they couldn't get on without March," and held its head higher for that one of its members was a Varsity player. It is not a frequent thing to find a freshman on the Varsity team, even as substitute, and Joel's fame grew apace and many congratulations were extended to him, in classroom and out. Blair was one of the first to climb the

stairs of Mayer and express pleasure at the event. He found Joel seated in the window, propped up with half a dozen crimson pillows, attempting to sketch the view across the yard to send home to his sister. West was splicing a golf shaft and whistling blithely over the task.

"Hello, Sophy," cried that youth, "have you come to initiate us into the Sacred Order of Hullabalooloo? Dump those books off the chair and be seated. March is such a beastly untidy chap," he sighed; "he *will* leave his books around that way despite all I can say!"

"These books, Out," replied Blair, "bear the name of one West on their title pages, and, in fact, on a good many other pages, too. What say you?" A look of intense surprise overspread the face of Outfield.

"How passing strange," he muttered. "And is there a chemistry note-book among them?"

"I think so. Here is one that contains mention of C_2H_6O, H_2SO_4, and other mystic emblems which appear very tiresome; it also contains several pages filled with diagrams of the yard and plans of Pompeii before the devastation."

"Yes," answered West, "that's my chem. note-book. It's been missing ever since Tuesday. But those are not diagrams of the yard, my sophomoric friend; they're plans of the golf course."

"Well, just as you say. Catch! Say, March, I've just heard that you've made the Varsity. I'm most splendidly

glad, my young friend. You make three Hillton fellows on the team. There's Selkirk, and you, and yours tenderly; and we'll show them what's what when Yates faces us. And I'll tell you a little fact that may interest you. Prince won't last until the Yates game, my lad. He's going silly in his ankle. But don't say I told you, for of course it's a dead secret. And if he gives out you'll get the posish. And then if you can make another one of those touch-downs in the Yates game——"

"Shut up, please, Blair!" groaned Joel.

"Nonsense, you're all right. I heard Dutton saying last week that nothing short of a ten-story house could have stopped you that day."

"He must think me an awful fool," responded Joel. "The idea of not remembering that I was off-side!"

"Pshaw; why, the first time I played against Eustace at Hillton I tackled the referee in mistake for the man with the ball! And threw him, too! And sat on his head!" West grinned.

"And they *did* say, Blair, that you were feeling aggrieved against that referee because he had called you down for holding. And I *have* heard that you weren't such a fool as you looked."

"Nothing in it, my boy," answered Wesley Blair airily. "Mere calumny. Am I one to entertain feelings of anger and resentment against my fellow men? Verily, very much not. But he put me off, did that referee chap. He was in-

capable of accepting the joke. What is more depressing than a fellow who can't see a joke, March?"

"Two fellows who can't see—et cetera," answered Joel promptly.

"Wrong, very wrong. I don't know what the answer is, but I'm quite certain it isn't that. Well, I must be going. *I* have studies. *I* don't waste the golden moments in idleness. I grind, my young and thoughtless friends, I grind. Well, I only came up to congratulate you, Mr. March, of Maine. I have done so. I now depart. Farewell! Never allow the mere fact of being off-side interfere with——"

Blair slammed the door just in front of a whizzing golf ball and clattered downstairs. Presently he appeared on the walk beneath the window and wiggled his fingers derisively with the thumb against a prominent feature of his face. But at the first squeak of the window being pushed up he disappeared around the corner.

Joel's days were now become very busy ones. Every morning he was awakened at seven, and at eight was required to be on hand at the training table for breakfast. The quarters were at Old's, a boarding house opposite the college yard, and here in a big, sunny front room the two long tables were laid with numerous great dishes of oatmeal or hominy, platters of smoking steak, chops or crisp bacon, plates of toast, while potatoes, usually baked, flanked the meat. The beverage was always milk, and tall pitchers of it were constantly filled and emptied during this as well as the other meals.

And then there were eggs—eggs hard boiled, eggs soft boiled, eggs medium, eggs poached—until, at the end of the season, the mere mention of eggs caused Joel's stomach to writhe in disgust.

During breakfast disabilities were inquired after, men who were known to have nerves were questioned as to their night's rest, and orders for the day were given out. This man was instructed to see the doctor, another to interview the trainer, a third to report to the head coach. The meal over, save for a half hour of practice for the backs behind the gymnasium the men were free to give all their energies to lessons, and so hurried away to recitation hall or room.

At one o'clock the team assembled again for lunch, with books in hand, and at break-neck speed devoured the somewhat elaborate repast, each man rushing in, eating, and rushing out, with no attempt at sociability or heed to the laws of digestion.

Afternoon practice was at four o'clock. Individual practice was followed by team practice against an imaginary foe, and this in turn gave place to a line-up against the second eleven. Two stiff twenty-minute halves were played. Then again individuals were seized on by captain and coaches and put through paces to remedy some fault or other. And then the last player trots off the field, and the coaches, conversing earnestly among themselves, follow, and the day's work is done. There are still the bath and the rub-down and the

weighing; but these are gone through with leisurely while the day's work is discussed and the coaches, circulating among the fellows, inflict an epilogue of criticism and instruction.

There remained usually the better part of an hour before dinner, and this period Joel spent in his room, where, with the lamp throwing its glow over his shoulder, he strove to take his mind from the subject of tackling and starting, of punting and passing, and fix it upon his studies for the morrow.

For life was far from being all play that fall—if hard practice and strict training can be called play!—and Joel found it necessary to occupy every moment not taken up by eating, sleeping, and practicing on the gridiron with hard study. It can scarcely be truthfully asserted that Joel's lessons suffered by reason of his adherence to athletics, though a lecture now and then was slighted that he might use the time in pursuing some study that lack of leisure had necessitated his neglecting.

But a clear head, a good digestion, and racing blood render studying a pleasure rather than a task, and Joel found that, while giving less time than before to lessons, he learned them fully as well. One thing is certain: his standing in class did not suffer, even when the coaches were more than usually severe. Joel's experience that fall, and many a time later, led him to conclude that the amount of outdoor athletics indulged in and the capability for study are in direct ratio.

West, too, was a most studious young gentleman that term, and began to pride himself on his recently discovered ability to learn. To be sure, golf was a hard taskmaster, but with commendable self-denial he did not allow it to interfere with his progress in class. Both he and Joel had earned the name of being studious ere the end of the fall term, and neither of them resented it.

Unlike the preceding meal, dinner at the training table was a sociable and cheerful affair, when every man at the board tried his best to be entertaining, and when "shop," either study or football, was usually tabooed. The menu was elaborate. There were soup, two or three kinds of meat, a half dozen vegetables, sauces, the ever-present toast, pudding or cream, and plenty of fruit; and for drinkables, why, there was the milk, and sometimes light ale in lesser quantities. At one end of the table—whether head or foot is yet undecided—sat the captain, at the other end the head coach. Other coaches were present as well, and the trainer sat at the captain's left.

There was always lots of noise, for weighty things were seldom touched upon in the conversation, and jokes were given and taken in good part. When all other means of amusement failed there were still the potatoes to throw; and a butter chip, well laden, can be tossed upward in such a manner that it will remain stuck more or less securely to the ceiling. This is a trick that comes only with long practice, but any one may try it; and the ceiling above the training

table that year was always well studded with suspended disks of crockery. Bread fights—so named because the ammunition is more likely to be potatoes—were extremely popular, and the dinner often came to an end with a pitched battle, in which coats were decorated from collar to hem with particles of that clinging vegetable.

His evenings usually belonged to Joel to spend as he wished, though not unfrequently a blackboard talk by the head coach or a lecture by some visiting authority curtailed them considerably. He had always to be in bed by ten o'clock.

But sleep sometimes, especially after a day of hard practice, did not readily come, and he often laid awake until midnight had sounded out on the deep-toned bell in the old church tower thinking over the events of the day, and wondering what fate, in the person of the head coach, held in view for him. And one night he awoke to find Outfield shaking him violently by the shoulder.

"Wh-what's the row?" he asked sleepily.

"You," answered Outfield. "You've been yelling '4, 9; 5, 7; 8, 6' for half an hour. What's the matter with you, anyhow?"

"The signals," muttered Joel, turning sleepily over, "that's a run around left end by left half-back. And don't forget to start when the ball's snapped. And jump high if you're blocked. And—don't—forget—to——" Snore—snore!

"Well," muttered West as he stumbled against an armchair and climbed into bed, "of all crazy games——"

But West was not in training and so possessed the faculty of going to sleep when his head struck the pillow. As a consequence the rest of his remark was never heard.

CHAPTER XX.

AN OLD FRIEND.

"MARCH! Joel March!"

Joel was striding along under the shadow of the chapel on his way from a recitation to Mayer and his room. The familiar tones came from the direction of the library, and turning he saw Stephen Remsen trotting toward him with no regard for the grass. Joel hurdled the knee-high wire barrier and strode to meet him. The two shook hands warmly, almost affectionately, in the manner of those who are glad to meet.

"March, I'm delighted to see you again! I was just going to look you up. Which way were you going?"

"Up to the room. Can't you come up for a while? When'd you arrive? Are you going to stay now?"

"Third down!" laughed Remsen. "No gain! What a fellow you are for questions, March! I got in this morning, and I'm going to stay until after the Yates game. They telegraphed me to come and coach the tackles. Instead of going to your room let's go to mine. I've taken a suite of one room and a closet at Dixon's on the avenue. I haven't

unpacked my toothbrush yet. Come over with me and take lunch, and we'll talk it all over."

So Joel stuck his books under his arm and the two crossed the yard, traversing the quadrangle in front of University and debouching on to the avenue near where the tall shaft of the Soldiers' Monument gleams in the sunlight. But they did not wait until Remsen's room was gained to "talk it all over." Joel had lots to tell about the Hillton fellows whom he had not lost sight of: of how Clausen was captain of the freshman Eleven and was displaying a wonderful faculty for generalship; how West was still golfing and had at last met foemen worthy of his steel; how Dicky Sproule was in college taking a special course, and struggling along under popular dislike; how Whipple and Cooke were rooming together in Peck, the former playing on the sophomore class team and going in for rowing, and the latter still the same idle, good-natured ignoramus, and liked by every fellow who knew him; how Digbee was grinding in Lanter with Somers; how Cartwright had joined the Glee Club; and how Christie had left college and gone into business with his father.

"And Cloud?" asked Remsen. "Have you seen him?"

"Yes, once or twice. I've heard that he was very well liked when he left St. Eustace last year. I dare say he has turned over a new leaf since his father died."

"Indeed? I hadn't heard of that."

"West heard it. He died last spring, and left Cloud

pretty near penniless, they say. I have an idea that he has taken a brace and is studying more than he used to."

"The chap has plenty of good qualities, I suppose. We all have our bad ones, you know. Perhaps it only needed some misfortune to wake up the lad's better nature. They say virtue thrives best on homely fare, and, like lots of other proverbs, I guess it's sometimes true."

Then Remsen told of his visit to Hillton a few weeks previous. The Eleven this year was in pretty good shape, he thought; Greene, an upper middle man, was captain; they expected to have an easy time with St. Eustace, who was popularly supposed to be in a bad way for veteran players. That same Greene was winning the golf tournament when he was there, Remsen continued, and the golf club was in better shape than ever before, thanks to the hard work of West, Whipple, Blair, and a few others in building it up.

The two friends reached the house, and Remsen led the way into his room, and set about unpacking his things. Joel took up a position on the bed and gave excellent advice as to the disposal of everything from a pair of stockings to a typewriter.

"It's a strange fact," said Remsen as he thrust a suit of pajamas under the pillow, "that Outfield West is missed at Hillton more than any fellow who has graduated from there for several years past. Perhaps I don't mean exactly strange, either, for of course he's a fellow that every one naturally likes. What I do mean is that one would naturally suppose

fellows like Blair or Whipple would leave the most regrets behind them, for Blair was generally conceded to be the most popular fellow in school the last two years of his stay, and Whipple was surely running him a close second. And certainly their memories are still green. But everywhere I went it was: 'Have you heard from Outfield West?' 'How's West getting on at college?' And strange to say, such inquiries were not confined to the fellows alone. Professor Wheeler asked after West particularly, and so did Briggs, and several others of the faculty; and Mrs. Cowles as well.

"But you are still the hero there, March. The classic history of Hillton still recounts the prowess of one Joel the First, who kicked a goal from field and defeated thereby the hosts of St. Eustace. And Professor Durkee shakes his head and says he will never have another so attentive and appreciative member of his class. And now tell me, how are you getting on with Dutton?"

So Joel recited his football adventures in full, not omitting the ludicrous touch-down, which received laughing applause from his listener, and recounting his promotion to the position of Varsity substitute.

"Yes, I saw in the paper last week that you had been placed on the sub list of the Varsity. I hope you'll have a chance to play against Yates, although I don't wish Prince any harm. He's a good fellow and a hard worker. Hello, it's one-fifteen. Let's get some lunch."

A half hour later they parted, Joel hurrying off to reci-

tation and Remsen remaining behind to keep an appointment with a friend. After this they met almost every day, and Remsen was a frequent caller at Joel's room, where he with Joel and Outfield held long, cosy chats about every subject from enameling golf balls to the Philosophy of Kant and the Original Protoplasm.

Meanwhile the season hurried along. Harwell met and defeated the usual string of minor opponents by varying scores, and ran up against the red and blue of Keystone College with disastrous results. But one important contest intervened between the present time and the game with Yates, and the hardest sort of hard work went on daily inside the inclosed field. A small army of graduates had returned to coach the different players, and the daily papers were filled, according to their wont, with columns of sensational speculation and misinformation regarding the merits of the team and the work they were performing. Out of the mass of clashing "facts" contained in the daily journals but one thing was absolutely apparent: to wit, the work of the Harwell Eleven was known only to the men and the coaches, and neither would tell about it.

At last, when chill November had been for a few days in the land, the game with the red and white clad warriors from Ithaca took place on a wet and muddy field, and Joel played the game through from start to finish, Prince being engaged in nursing his treacherous ankle, which had developed alarming symptoms with the advent of wet weather. The game

resulted in a score of twenty-four to five, the Ithacans scoring a neat, but inexcusable, goal from field in the first half. Joel played like a Trojan, and went around the left end of the opposing line time and again for good gains, until the mere placing of the ball in his hands was accepted by the spectators as equal to an accomplished gain.

Wesley Blair made a dashing charge through a crowded field for twelve yards and scored a touch-down that brought the onlookers to their feet cheering. Dutton, the captain, played a steady brilliant interfering game, and Kingdon, at right half-back, plunged through the guard-tackle holes time and again with the ball hugged to his stomach, and kept his feet in a manner truly marvelous until the last inch had been gained.

But critics nevertheless said unkind things of the team work as they wended their way back over the sodden turf, and shook their heads dubiously over the field-goal scored by the opponents. There would be a general shaking up on the morrow, they predicted, and we should see what we should see. And the coaches, too, although they dissembled their feelings under cheerful countenances, found much to condemn, and the operations of bathing, dressing, and weighing that afternoon were less enjoyable to the breathless, tattered men.

The next day the team "went into executive session," as Joel called it, and the predicted shake-up took place. Murdoch, the left guard, was deemed too slight for the place, and was sent to the side line, from where he presently crawled to

a seat on the great empty stand, and hiding his blanketed head wept like a child. And there were other changes made. Joel kept his place at left half, pending the bettering of Prince's ankle, and Blair was secure at full. But when the practice game began, many of the old forms were either missing or to be seen in the second Eleven's line, and the coaches hovered over the field of battle with dark, forbidding looks, and said mean things whenever the opportunity presented itself, and were icily polite to each other, as men will be when they know themselves to be in the right and every one else in the wrong. And so practice that Thursday was an unpleasant affair, and had the desired effect; for the men played the game for all that was in them and attended strictly to the matter in hand, forgetting for the time the intricacies of Latin compositions and the terrors of coming examinations. When it was over Joel crawled off of the scale with the emotions of a weary draught horse and took his way slowly toward home. In the square he ran against Outfield, who, armed with a monstrous bag of golf requisites, had just leaped off a car.

"Hello, Joel," he cried. "What's happened? Another off-sider? Have you broken that finger again? Honest Injun, what's up?"

"Nothing, Out; I'm just kind of half dead. We had two thirty-minute halves, with forty-'leven coaches yelling at us every second, and a field like a turnip patch just before seeding. Oh, no, there's nothing the matter; only if you

know of any quiet corner where I can die in peace, lead me there, Out. I won't keep you long; it will soon be over."

"No, I don't, my flippant young friend, but I know something a heap better."

"Nothing can be better any more, Out. Still—well, what is it?"

"A couple of hot lemonades and a pair of fat sandwiches at Noster's. Come along."

"You're not so bad, Out," said Joel as they hurried up the street. "You have *moments* of almost human intelligence!"

CHAPTER XXI.

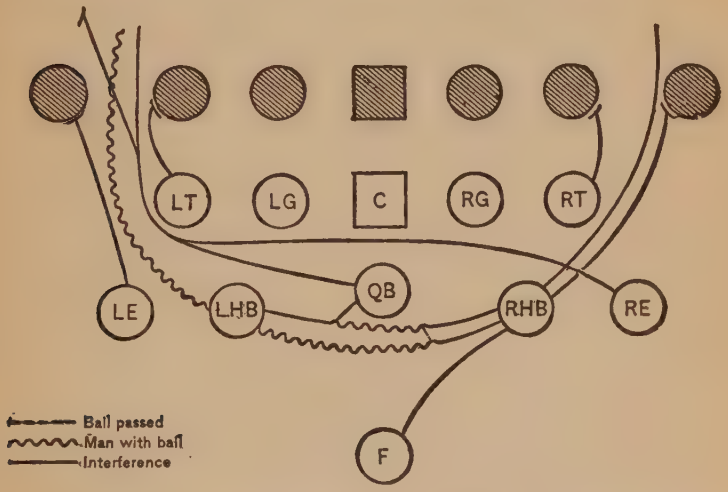
THE DEPARTURE.

The backs and substitute backs, together with Story, the quarter, Captain Dutton, and one or two assistant coaches, including Stephen Remsen, were assembled in Bancroft 6. The head coach was also present, and with a long pointer in one hand and a piece of chalk in the other was going through a sequence for the benefit of the backs, who had been called a half hour ahead of the rest of the Eleven. The time was a half hour after dinner.

On the blackboard strange squares and lines and circles confronted the men in the seats. The head coach placed the tip of the pointer on a diagram marked "No. 2. Criss-Cross."

"This is the second of the sequence, and is an ordinary criss-cross from left half-back to right half-back. If you don't understand it readily, say so. I want you to ask all the questions you can think of. The halves take positions, as in the preceding play, back of the line behind the tackle-guard holes. The ball goes to left half, who runs just back of quarter. Right half starts a moment after the ball is put in play, also going back of quarter and outside of left half and

receiving the ball at a hand pass from the latter, and continuing on through the hole between left end and tackle. Right end starts simultaneously with left half, taking the course indicated, in front of quarter and close to the line, and interfering through the line for the runner.

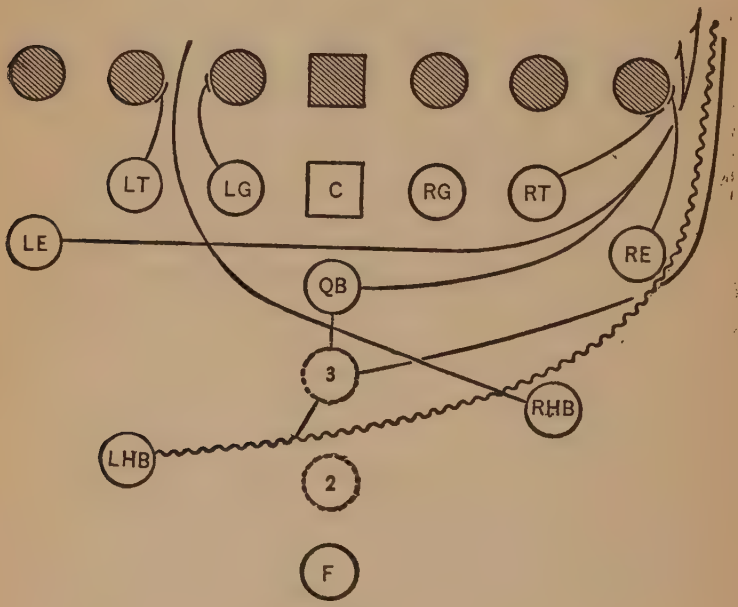


"Left end blocks opposing end outward. Quarter clears the hole out for the runner. Full-back does not start until the pass from quarter to left half is made. He must then time himself so as to protect the second pass. In case of a fumble the ball is his to do the best he can with through the end-tackle hole. If the pass is safe he follows left half through, blocking opposing left end long enough to keep him out of the play.

"You will go through this play to-morrow and you will

get your slips to-morrow evening here. Now is there anything not clear to you?"

Apparently there was a great deal, for the questions came fast and furious, the coaches all taking a hand in the discussion, and the diagram being explained all over again very patiently by the head. Then another diagram was tackled.



3rd PLAY

"The third of this sequence is from an ordinary formation," began the head coach. "It is intended to give the idea of a kick, or, failing that, of a run around left end. It will very probably be used as a separate play in the last few

minutes of a half, especially where the line-up is near the side line, right being the short side of the field. You will be given the signal calling this as a separate play to-morrow evening.

"Full-back stands as for a kick, and when the signal is given moves in a step or two toward quarter as unnoticeably as possible; position 2 in the diagram. He must be careful to come to a full stop before the ball is snapped back, and should time himself so that he will not have to stay there more than a second. The instant the ball is snapped full-back runs forward to the position indicated here by 3, and receives the ball on a short pass from quarter. Left half starts at the same instant, and receives the ball from full as he passes just behind him, continuing on and around the line outside of right end. It is right half's play to make the diversion by starting with the ball and going through the line between left tackle and guard; he is expected to get through and into the play on the other side. Left end starts when the ball is snapped, and passing across back of the forwards clears out the hole for the runner. Quarter interferes, assisted by full-back, and should at all costs down opposing half. Right end helps right tackle throw in opposing end. Much of the success of this play depends on the second pass, from full-back to left half, and it must be practiced until there is no possibility of failure. Questions, fellows."

After the discussion of the last play a half hour's talk on

interference was given to the rest of the Eleven and substitutes, who had arrived meanwhile. Remsen and Joel left Bancroft together and crossed the yard toward the latter's room. The sky was bright with myriads of stars and the buildings seemed magnified by the wan radiance to giant castles. Under the shadow of University Remsen paused to light his pipe, and, without considering, the two found themselves a moment later seated on the steps.

From the avenue the clang-clang of car gongs sounded sharp and clear, and red and white and purple lights flitted like strange will-o'-wisps through the half light, and disappeared into the darkness beyond the common. The lights in the stores beamed dimly. A green shade in Pray's threw a sickly shaft athwart the pavement. But even as they looked a tall figure, weariness emanating from every movement, stepped between window and light, book in hand, and drew close the blinds.

"Poor devil!" sighed Remsen. "Three hours more of work, I dare say, before he stumbles, half blind, into bed. And all for what, Joel? That or—that?" He pointed with his pipe-stem to where Jupiter shone with steady radiance high in the blue-black depths; then indicated a faint yellow glow that flared for an instant in the darkness across the yard where a passer had paused to light his pipe.

"We can't all be Jupiters, Remsen," answered Joel calmly. "Some of us have to be little sticks of wood with brimstone tips. But they're very useful little things, matches.

And, after all, does it matter as long as we do what we have to do as well as we can? Old Jupiter up there is a very fine chap undoubtedly, and if he shirked a minute or two something unpleasant would probably occur; but he isn't performing his task any better than the little match performed his. 'Scratch—pouf' and the match's work's done. But it has lighted a fire. Can you do better, Mr. Jupiter?"

Remsen made no reply for a moment, but Joel knew that he was smiling there beside him. A little throng of students passed by, humming softly a song in time with their echoing footsteps, and glanced curiously at the forms on the steps. Then Remsen struck a match on the stone.

"'Scratch—pouf!'" he said musingly, relighting his pipe. In the act of tossing the charred splinter away he stopped; then he laid it beside him on the step. "Good little match," he muttered. Joel laughed softly.

"March," asked Remsen presently, "have you changed your mind yet about studying law?"

"No; but sometimes I get discouraged when I think of what a time it will take to arrive anywhere. And sometimes, too, I begin to think that a fellow who can't talk more readily than I ought to go into the hardware business or raise chickens for a living instead of trying to make a lawyer out of himself."

"It isn't altogether talk, March," answered Remsen, "that makes a good lawyer. Brains count some. If you get where you can conduct a case to a successful result you will

never miss the 'gift o' the gab.' Talking's the little end of the horn in my profession, despite tradition.

"I asked for a reason, March," he went on. "What do you say to our forming a partnership? When you get through the Law School you come to me, if you wish, and tell me that you are ready to enter my office, and I'll answer 'I'm very glad to have you, Mr. March.' Of course we could arrange for a regular partnership a year or so later. Meanwhile the usual arrangement would be made. It may be that you know of some very much better office which you would prefer to go to. If you do, all right. If you don't, come to me. What do you say?"

"But—but what good would I do you?" Joel asked, puzzled at the offer. "I'd like it very much, of course, but I can't see——"

"I'll tell you, March. I have a good deal of faith in your future, my boy. You have a great deal of a most valuable thing called application, which I have not, worse luck. You are also sharp-witted and level-headed to a remarkable degree. And some day, twenty or thirty years from now, you'll likely be *hard*-headed, but I'll risk that. By the time you're out of college I shall be wanting a younger man to take hold with me. There will be plenty of them, but I shall want a good one. And that is why I make this offer. It is entirely selfish, and you need not go searching for any philanthropy in it. I'm only looking a bit ahead and buttering my toast while it's hot, March. What do you

say? Or, no, you needn't say anything to-night. Think it over for a while, and let me know later."

"But I don't want to think it over," answered Joel eagerly. "I'm ready to sign such a partnership agreement now. If you really believe that I would—could be of use to you, I'd like it mightily. And I know all about your 'selfishness,' and I'm very grateful to you for—for buttering your toast."

Later, when they arose and went on, Remsen consented to accompany Joel to his room, bribed thereto with a promise of hot chocolate. They found Outfield diligently poring over a Greek history. But he immediately discarded it in favor of a new book on the Royal Game which lay in his lap hidden under a note book.

"You see," he explained, "old Pratt has taken a shine to me, and I expected him to call this evening. And I thought at first that you were he—or him—which is it? And of course I didn't want to disappoint the old gentleman; he has such a fine opinion of me, you know."

While Outfield boiled the water and laid bare the contents of the larder, Joel told him of Remsen's offer. A box of biscuits went down with a crash, and Outfield turned indignantly.

"That's all very fine," he exclaimed. "But where do I come in? How about Mr. West? Where does he get his show in this arrangement? You promised that if I studied law, too, Joel, you'd go into partnership with *me*. Now, didn't you?"

"But it was all in fun," protested Joel, distressedly. "I didn't suppose you meant it, you know."

"Meant it!" answered Outfield indignantly. "Of course I meant it. Don't you expect I appreciate level-headedness and sharp-wittedness and applicationousness just as much as Remsen? Why, I had it all fixed. We were to have an office fitted with cherry railings and revolving bookcases near—near——"

"A good links?" suggested Remsen smilingly.

"Well, yes," admitted Outfield, "that wouldn't be a half bad idea. But now you two have gone and spoiled it all."

"Well, I tell you, West," suggested Remsen, "you come in with us and supply the picturesque element of the business. You might look after the golf cases, you know; injuries to bald-headed gentlemen by gutties; trespassing by players; forfeiting of leases, and so forth. What do you say?"

"All right," answered Outfield cheerfully. "But it must be understood that the afternoons belong to the links and not to the law."

So Stephen Remsen and Joel March sealed their agreement by shaking hands, and Outfield grinned approval.

One afternoon a few days later Outfield pranced into the room just as dusk was falling brandishing aloft a silver-plated mug, and uttering a series of loud cheers for "Me." Joel, who had returned but a moment before from a hard after-

noon's practice, and was now studying in the window seat by the waning light, looked languidly curious.

"A trophy, Joel, a trophy from the links!" cried West. "Won by the great Me by two holes from Jenkins, Jenkins the Previously Great, Jenkins the Defeated and Devastated!" He tossed the mug into Joel's lap.

"I'm very glad, Out," said the latter. "Won't it help you with the team?"

"It will, my discerning friend. It will send me to New York next month to represent Harwell. And Lapham says I must go to Lakewood for the open tournament. Oh, little Outie is some pumpkins, my lad! It was quite the most wonderful young match to-day. Jenkins led all the way to the fifteenth hole. Then he foozled like a schoolboy, and I holed out in one and went on to the Cheese Box in two."

"I'm awfully glad," repeated Joel, smiling up into the flushed and triumphant face of his chum. "If you go to New York it will be after the big game, and, if you like, I'll go with you and shout." Outfield West executed a war-dance and whooped ecstatically.

"Will you, Joel? Honest Injun? Cross your heart and hope to die? Then shake hands, my lad; it's a bargain! Now, where's my chemistry?"

The days flew by and the date of the Yates game rapidly approached. The practice was secret every afternoon, and the coaches lost weight eluding the newspaper reporters.

Prince disappointed Joel by returning to the Varsity with his ankle apparently as well as ever, although he was generally "played easy," and Joel often took his place in the second half of the practice games.

And at last the Thursday preceding the big game arrived, and the team and substitutes, together with the trainer and the manager and the head coach and two canine mascots, assembled in the early morning in the square and were hustled into coaches and driven into town to their train. And half the college heroically arose phenomenally early and stood in the first snow storm of the year and cheered and cheered for the team individually and collectively, for the head coach and the trainer, for the rubbers and the mascots, and, between times, for the college.

The players went to a little country town a few miles distant from the seat of Yates University, and spent the afternoon in practicing signals on the hotel grounds. The next day, Friday, was a day of rest, save for running through a few formations and trick plays after lunch and taking a long walk at dusk. The Yates Glee Club journeyed over in the evening and gave an impromptu entertainment in the parlor, a courtesy well appreciated by the Harwell team, whose nerves were now beginning to make themselves felt. And the next morning the journey was continued and the college town was reached at half past eleven.

The men were welcomed at the station by a crowd of

Harwell fellows who had already arrived, and the Harwell band did its best until the team was driven off to the hotel. There for the first time the men were allowed to see the line-up for the game. It was a long list, containing the names, ages, heights, and weights of thirty-six players and substitutes, and was immediately the center of interest to all.

"Thunder!" growled Joel ruefully, as he finished reading the list over Blair's shoulder, "it's a thumpin' long ways down to *me!*"

CHAPTER XXII.

BEFORE THE BATTLE.

"HARWELL, Harwell, Harwell! Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah. Rah-rah-rah, Harwell!"

The lobby grew empty on the instant, and outside on the steps and on the sidewalk the crowd spread itself. The procession had just turned the corner, the college band leading.

"The freshmen won!" cried a voice on the edge of the throng, and the news was passed along from man to man until it swept up the steps, through the lobby and to the dining room upstairs where the football men of the Varsity team were impatiently awaiting lunch. "A good omen," said the head coach.

Below in the street admonitory thumps upon the great drum, with its college coat-of-arms on the head, were heard, and a moment later the shouts of the exuberant freshmen and their allies were drowned in the first strains of the college song. Off came the silk hats of the frock-coated graduates and the plaided golf caps of the students, and side by side there in the sun-swept street they lifted their voices in the

sweet, measured strains of the dear familiar hymn. And stout, placid-faced men of fifty, with comfortable bank accounts and incipient twinges of gout, felt the unaccustomed dimming of the sight that presages tears, and boyish, carefree students, to whom the song was as much an everyday affair as D marks and unpaid bills, felt strange stirrings in their breasts, and with voices that stumbled strangely over the top notes sang louder and louder. And upstairs in the dining room many a throat grew hard and " lumpy " as the refrain came in at the open windows.

But, as the trainer muttered presently, it was only the freshmen who had won, and the real battle of the day was yet to come. And soon the band and the shouting parade wheeled away from beneath the windows and swung off up the street to make known far and wide the greatness of Harwell, her freshmen, and the grandeur of their victory over the youngsters of Yates. And, as the last cheer floated up from the procession as it disappeared around a far corner, lunch was served, and player and coach, trainer and rubber, substitute and mascot, drew up to the last meal before—what? Victory or defeat?

It was not a merry repast, that lunch before the fray. Some men could not bring themselves to eat at all until the coaches commanded with dire threats. Others, as though nothing out of the ordinary was about to take place, ate heartily, hungrily, of everything set before them. At the far end of the room Joel March played with his steak and

tried to delude himself into thinking he was eating. He felt rather upset, and weak in the joints, and as for the lad's stomach it had revolted at sight of the very first egg. But luckily the last meal before a game has little effect one way or the other upon the partaker, since he is already keyed up, mentally and physically, to a certain pitch, and nothing short of cold poison can alter it.

In the streets below, for blocks in all directions, the crowds surged up and down, and shouts for Harwell and yells for Yates rose like challenges in the afternoon air. Friends met who had not done so for years, enemies accorded enemies bows of recognition ere they remembered their enmity. The deep blue and the deeper crimson passed and counterpassed, brushed and fluttered side by side, and lighted up the little college city till it looked like a garden of roses and violets.

And everywhere, over all, was the tensity that ever reigns before a battle.

The voices of the ticket speculator and of the merchant of "Offish'l Score Cards" were heard upon every side. The street cars poked their blunt noses through the crowd which closed in again behind them like water about the stern of a ship. Violets blossomed or crimson chrysanthemums bloomed upon every coat and wrap, or hung pendant from the handle of cane and umbrella. The flags of Harwell and Yates, the white H and white Y, were everywhere. Shop windows were partisan to the blue, but held dashes

of crimson as a sop to the demands of hospitality and welcome.

At one o'clock the exodus from town began. Along the road that leads to the football field hurried the sellers of rush cushions and badges, of score cards and pencils, of blue and crimson flags and cheap canes, of peanuts and sandwiches, of soda water and sarsaparilla, bent upon securing advantageous stands about the entrance. A quarter of an hour later the spectators were on the way. The cars, filled in and out with shouting humanity, crept slowly along, a bare half block separating them. Roystering students swung arm in arm in eccentric dance from side to side across the street. Ladies with their escorts hurried along the sidewalks. Carriages, bright with fluttering flags, rolled by. Bicycles darted in and out, their riders throwing words of salutation over their shoulders to friends by the way. In the windows along the route was displayed the bravery of blue banners. A window in a college hall was piled high with great comfortable-looking pillows, each bearing a great challenging Y in white ribbon or embroidery. And overhead the sky arched a broad blue expanse from horizon to horizon.

In this manner on some fair morning, centuries ago, did all Greece wend its way to the Stadium and the Games of Olympia.

In the hotel the lunch was over and that terrible age between it and the arrival of the coaches was dragging its

weary length along. Joel and Blair were standing by the window talking in voices that tried to be calm, cool and indifferent, but which were neither.

"They're offering bets of ten to nine downstairs that Yates wins," remarked Blair with elaborate composure.

"Are they?" responded Joel absent-mindedly, thinking the while of the signal for the second sequence. "I thought the odds were even."

"They were until the news about Chesney's shoulder got about."

"But there isn't really anything the matter with his shoulder, is there?"

"No. No one knows how the story got out. Whipple was taking all he could get a while ago."

"Some one wants to see you at the door, March," called the trainer, and Joel found Outfield West, smiling and happy, waiting there.

"How are you?" he whispered. "All right? How are the rest? Great Gobble, Joel, but these Yates Johnnies are so sure of winning that they can't keep still! There's a rumor here in the lobby that Yates's center is sick. Know anything about it?" Joel shook his head. "Well, I'll see you out at the field. We're going out now; Cooke, and Caldwell, and some of the others. So long, my valiant lad. Keep a stiff upper lip and never say die, and all that, you know. Adios!"

There was a cheer below, and Blair, at the window, an-

nounced the arrival of the conveyances. Instantly the lethargy of a minute before was turned to excited bustle and confusion. Pads and nose-guards, jerseys and coats, balls and satchels were seized and laid aside and grabbed up again. Cries for missing apparel and paraphernalia were heard on every side, and only a loud, peremptory command to "Shut up!" from the head coach restored order and quietude. Then the door was thrown open and down the narrow stairs they trooped, through the crowded lobby where friends hemmed them about, patting the broad backs, shouting words of cheer into their ears, and delaying them in their passage.

Into the coaches they hurried, and as the crowd about the hotel burst into loud, ringing cheers, the whips were cracked and the journey to the field began. The route lay along quiet, unfrequented streets where only an occasional cheer from a college window met their advent. Restraint had worn off now, and the fellows were chatting fast and furiously. Joel looked out at the handsome homes and sunny street, and was aware only of a longing to be in the fray, an impatient desire to be doing. Briscom, the substitute centre, a youth of twenty-one summers and one hundred and ninety-eight pounds, sat beside him.

"I was here two years ago with the freshman team," he was saying. "We didn't do a thing to them, we youngsters, although the Varsity was licked badly. And all during the afternoon game we sat together and cheered, until at five o'clock I couldn't speak above a whisper. That was a great

game, that freshman contest! It took three hours and a half to settle it. At the beginning of the second half there were only three men on our team who had played in the first. I was one of them. I was playing left guard. Story there was another. He gave up before the game was through, though. I held out and when the whistle sounded, down I went on the grass and didn't stir for ten minutes. We had two referees that day. The first chap got hurt in a rush, and it took us half an hour to find a fellow brave enough to take his place. That *was* a game. Football's tame nowadays."

Across the coach Rutland, the right guard, a big bronze-haired chap of one hundred and ninety-six, was deep in a discussion with "Judge" Chase, right end, on an obscure point of ruling.

"If you're making a fair catch and a player on the other side runs against you intentionally or otherwise, you're interfered with, and the rules give your side fifteen yards," declared Rutland.

"Not if the interference is accidental and doesn't hurt your catch," replied Chase. "If the other fellow is running and can't stop in time——"

"Shut up, you fellows," growled Captain Dutton. "You play the game, and the referee will look after the rules for you."

"If you go on," said Briscom, "you must be careful about holding. De Farge (the referee) is awfully down on holding and off-side plays. Last year he penalized us eight times

during the game. But he's all right, just the same. He's the finest little ref that ever tossed a coin."

"I fear I won't get a show," mourned Joel.

"You can't tell," answered Briscom knowingly. "Last year there were two fellows ahead of me and I got on for twenty minutes of the last half. Trueland bent his ankle, Chesney hurt his knee, and Condon got whacked on the head. Watch the game every minute of the time, March, and learn how the Yates halves play the game. Then if you do go on you won't be in the dark."

The coaches rolled up to the players' entrance to the field, and the fellows hopped out and disappeared into the quarters.

The time was two o'clock. The gates were still thronged, although to the people already on the stands it was a puzzle where the newcomers were going to find seats. On the east side of the field Yates held open house. From end to end, and overflowing half way around both north and south stands, the blue of Yates fluttered in the little afternoon breeze till that portion of the field looked like a bank of violets.

On the west stand tier after tier of crimson arose until it waved against the limitless blue of the sky. Countless flags dipped and circled, crimson bonnets gleamed everywhere, and great bunches of swaying chrysanthemums nodded and becked to each other. All collegedom with its friends and relations was here; all collegedom, that is, within traveling distance;

beyond that, eager eyes were watching the bulletin boards from Maine to Mojave.

The cheering had begun. Starting at one end of the west stand the slogan sped, section by section, growing in volume as it went, and causing the crimson flags and banners to dance and leap in the sunlight. Across the field answering cheers thundered out and the bank of violets trembled as though a wind ruffled it. In front of the north stand the Yates college band added the martial strains of The Stars and Stripes Forever to the general pandemonium of enthusiasm.

Then along the west stand a ripple of laughter which grew into a loud cheer traveled, as a bent and decrepit figure attired in a long black frock coat and high silk hat, the latter banded with crimson ribbon, came into sight down the field. It was the old fruit seller of Harwell, whose years are beyond reckoning, and who is remembered by the oldest graduates. On he came, his old, wrinkled face grimacing in toothless smiles, his ribboned cane waving in his trembling hand, and his well-nigh bald head bowing a welcome to the watchers. For it was not he who was the guest, for from time almost immemorial the old fruit seller has presided at the contests of Harwell, rejoicing in her victories, lamenting over her defeats. Down the line he limped, while gray-haired graduates and downy-lipped undergrads cheered him loyally, calling his name over and over, and so back to a seat in the middle of the stand, from

where all through the battle his crimson-bedecked cane waved unceasingly.

He was not the only one welcomed by the throng. A great jurist, chrysanthemumed from collar to waist, bowed jovial acknowledgment of the applause his appearance summoned. The governor of a State came too to see once more the crimson of his alma mater clashing with the blue of her old enemy. Professors, who had put aside their books, beamed benevolently through their glasses as they walked somewhat embarrassedly past the grinning faces of their pupils. Old football players, former captains, bygone masters of rowing, commanders of olden baseball teams, all these and many more were there and were welcomed heartily, tumultuously, by the wearers of the red. And through it all the cheers went on, the college songs were sung, and the hearts of youth and age were happy and glad together.

Then the cry of "Here they come!" traveled along the field, and the blue-clad warriors leaped into the arena at the far end, and the east stand went delirious, and flags waved, and a tempest shook the bank of violets.

"Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Yates!"

And almost simultaneously the west stand arose and its voice arose to the sky in wild, frenzied shouts of

"Har-well, Har-well, Har-well, Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah Rah-rah-rah, Har-well! Har-well! Har-well!"

For over the fence came the head coach, and big Chesney

and Captain Dutton, Story, the little quarter-back, and all the others, a long line of crimson-stockinged warriors, with Joel March, Briscom, Bedford, and the other substitutes flocking along in the tag end of the procession. Over the field the two Elevens spread, while cheer after cheer met in mid-field, clashed, and rolled upward to the blue. Then came a bare five minutes of punting, dropping, passing, snapping, ere the officials appeared from somewhere and gathered the opposing captains to them. A coin flashed in the sunlight, spun aloft, descended, and was caught in the referee's palm. "Heads!" cried Ferguson, the Yates captain. "Heads it is!" announced the referee.

The substitutes retreated unwillingly to the side lines, the Harwell men spread themselves over the north end of the gridiron, Elton, the Yates full-back, ground his heel into the turf and pointed the ball, the cheering ceased, the whistle piped merrily, the bright new ball soared aloft on its arching flight, and the game of the year was on.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HARWELL *vs.* YATES—THE FIRST HALF.

THAT game will live in history.

It was a battle royal between giant foes. On one hand was the confidence begat of fifteen years of almost continuous victory over the crimson; on the other the desperation that such defeat brings. Yates had a proud record to sustain, Harwell a decade of worsting to atone for. And twenty-five thousand persons watched and hoped and feared as the battle raged.

Down settled the soaring ball into the arms of Kingdon, who tucked it under his arm and started with it toward the distant goal. But eight yards was all he found ere a Yates forward crashed down upon him. Then came a quick line-up on Harwell's forty yards, and first Prince, then Kingdon, then Blair was put through the line, each for a small gain, and the Harwell benches shouted their triumph. Again the pigskin was given to Prince for a try through the hole between tackle and guard, but this time he was hurled back for a loss. The next try was Kingdon's, and he made a yard around the Yates left end. It was the third down and five yards were

lacking. Back went the ball for a kick, and a moment later it was Yates's on her thirty-five yards, and again the teams were lining up. It was now the turn of the east stand to cheer, and mightily the shout rolled across the field.

Through came the Yates full, the ball safely stowed in the crook of his elbow, the whole force of the backs shoving him on. Three yards was his. Another line-up. Again the Yates full-back was given the ball, and again he gained. And it was the first down on Yates's forty-five-yard line. Then began a rout in which Harwell retreated and Yates pursued until the leather had crossed the middle of the field. The gains were made anywhere, everywhere, it seemed. Allardyce yielded time and again, and Selkirk beside him, lacking the other's support, was thrust aside almost at will. The Yates shouters were wild with joy, and the cheers of Harwell were drowned beneath the greater outbursts from the supporters of the blue.

Harwell appeared to be outclassed, so far as her rush line was concerned. Past the fifty-yard line went the ball, and between it and the next white streak, Harwell at last made a desperate stand, and secured the ball. At the first play it was sent speeding away from Blair's toe to the Yates mid-field, a long, clean, high kick, that led the forwards down under it in time to throw the waiting back ere he had taken a step, and that brought shouts of almost tearful delight from the Harwell sympathizers. Back to her line-bucking returned Yates, and slowly, but very surely,

YATES.

Full-back
ELTON, 184

Right Half-back
THOMPSON, 153

Left Half-back
CUSHING, 157

BIRCH, 160
Quarter-back

Right End — O'CALLAGHAN, 163
Right Tackle — FERGUSON, 203
Right Guard — MORRIS, 197
Centre — WILKES, 204
Left Guard — ALLISON, 194
Left Tackle — GALT, 189
Left End — FRASER, 150

Left End — DUTTON, 150
Left Tackle — SELKIRK, 186
Left Guard — ALLARDYCE, 189
Centre — CHESNEY, 229
Right Guard — RUTLAND, 196
Right Tackle — BURBRIDGE, 179
Right End — CHASE, 150

Quarter-back
STORY, 144

PRINCE, 157
Left Half-back

KINGDON, 182
Right Half-back

BLAIR, 179
Full-back

HARWELL.

the contest moved over the lost ground, back toward the Harwell goal. The fifty-five-yard line was passed again, the fifty, the forty-five, and here or there holes were being torn in the Harwell line, and the crimson was going down before the blue. At her forty-yard line Harwell stayed again for a while the onslaught of the enemy, and tried thrice to make ground through the Yates line. Then back to the hands of Wilkes went the oval and again the heart-breaking rout began.

Harwell made her last desperate rally on her twenty-five yards. The ball was thrown to Blair, who kicked, but not soon enough to get it out of the way of the opposing forwards, who broke through as the ball rose. It struck against the upstretched hand of the Yates right guard and bounded toward the crimson's goal. The Yates left half fell upon it. From there, without forfeiting the ball, Yates crashed down to the goal line, and hurled Elton, her crack full-back, through at last for a touch-down.

For five minutes chaos reigned upon the east stand. All previous efforts paled into nothingness beside the outbursts of cheers that followed each other like claps of thunder up and down the long bank of fluttering color. Upon the other side of the field no rival shouts were heard. It was useless to try and drown that Niagara of sound. But here and there crimson flags waved defiantly at the triumphant blue.

The goal was an easy one, though it is probable that it would have been made had it been five times more difficult;

for Elton was the acknowledged goal kicker par excellence of the year. Then back trotted the teams, and as the Harwell Eleven lined up for the kick-off Allardyce at left guard gave place to Murdoch. The big fellow had given out and had limped white-faced and choking from the field.

The whistle sounded and the ball rose into air, corkscrewing toward the Yates goal. Down the field under it went the Harwell runners like bolts from a bow, and the Yates half who secured the pigskin was downed where he caught. The two teams lined up quickly. Then back, foot by foot, yard by yard, went the struggling Harwell men. Yet the retreat was less like a rout than before, and Yates was having harder work. Her players were twice piled up against the Harwell center, and she was at last forced to send a blue-clad youth around the left end, an experiment which netted her twelve yards and which brought the east stand to its feet, yelling like mad.

But here the crimson line at length braced and the ball went to its center on three downs, and the tide turned for a while. The backs and the right end were hurled, one after another, at the opposing line, and shouts of joy arose from the crimson seats as gain after gain resulted. Thrice in quick succession Captain Dutton shot through the left end of the blue's line, the second time for a gain of five yards.

The cheering along the west side of the great field was now continuous, and the leaders, their crimson badges fluttering agitatedly, were waving their arms like tireless sema-

phores and exciting the supporters of Harwell to greater and greater efforts. Nearer and nearer to the coveted touch-down crept the crimson line. With clockwork precision the ball was snapped, the quarter passed, the half leaped forward, the rush line plunged and strove, and then from somewhere a faint "Down!" was cried; and the panting players staggered to their feet, leaving the ball yet nearer to the threatened goal line. On the blue's twenty-three yards the whistle shrilled, and a murmur of dismay crept over the Yates seats as it was seen that Captain Ferguson lay motionless on the ground. But a moment's rubbing brought him to his feet again.

"He's not much hurt," explained the knowing ones. "He wants to rest a bit."

A minute later, while the ball still hovered about the twenty-yard line, Yates secured it on a fumbled pass, and the tide ebbed away from the beleagured posts. Back as before were borne the crimson warriors, while the Yates forwards opened holes in the opposing line and the Yates halves dashed and wormed through for small gains. Then Fate again aided the crimson, and on the blue's forty-seven-yard line a fake kick went sadly aglee and the runner was borne struggling back toward his own goal before he could cry "Down!" And big Chesney grinned gleefully as he received the leather and bent his broad back above it.

Canes, crysanthemums, umbrellas, flags, carnations, hats, all these and many other things waved frantically above the

great bank of crimson as the little knot of gallant knights in moleskin crept back over their recent path of retreat and took the war again into the enemy's country. Every inch of the way was stubbornly contested by the defenders, but slowly they were pushed back, staggering under the shocks of the crimson's attack. Chesney, Rutland, and Murdoch worked together, side by side, like one man—or forty!—and when time was called for an instant on the Yates twenty-five yards it was to bring Galt, the blue's left tackle, back to consciousness and send him limping off the gridiron. His place in the line was taken by an old Hilltonian, one Dunsmore, and the game went on.

And now it was the blue that was in full retreat and the crimson that pursued. Nearer and nearer to the Yates goal line went the resisting besieged and the conquering besiegers, and the great black score-board announced but eight more minutes of the first half remaining. But even eight were three more than were needed. For Harwell crossed the twenty yards by tandem on tackle, gained the fifteen in two downs by wedges between tackle and guard, and from there on until the much-desired goal line was reached never paused in her breathless, resistless onslaught. It was Wesley Blair who at last put the ball over for a touch-down, going through between center and left guard with all the weight of the Harwell Eleven behind him. His smothered "Down!" was never heard, for the west stand was a swaying, tumultuous unit of thunderous acclaim.

Up went the flags and banners of crimson hues, loud sounded the pæan of praise and thanksgiving from thousands of straining throats, while below on the side lines the coaches leaped for joy and strained each other to their breasts in unspeakable delight.

And while the shouting went on as though never would the frenzied shouters cease, the grim, panting Yates players lined up back of their goal line, on tiptoe, ready at the first touch of the ball to the earth to spring forward and, leaping upward, strive to arrest the speeding oval. Prone upon the ground, the ball in his hands, lay Story. A yard or two distant Blair directed the pointing of it. The goal was a most difficult one, from an angle, and long the full-back studied and directed, until faint groans of derision arose from the impatient east stand and the men behind the goal line moved restively.

"Lacing to you," said Blair quietly. Story shifted the ball imperceptibly.

"More." The quarter-back obeyed.

"Cock it." Higher went the end toward the goal.

"Not so much." It was lowered carefully, slowly.

"Steady." Blair stepped back, glanced once swiftly at the cross-bar, and stepped forward again.

"Down!" Story's left hand touched the grass, the Yates men surged forward, there was a thud, and—

Upward sped the ball, rising, rising, until it topped the bar, then slowly turning over, over in its quicken-

ing descent. But the nearly silent west stand had broke again into loud cries of triumph, and upon the face of the scoreboard appeared the momentous word, "GOAL!"

Again the ball was put in play, but the half was soon over and the players, snatching their blankets, trotted to the dressing rooms. And the score-board announced:

"Opponents, 6. Yates, 6."

As the little swinging door closed behind him Joel found himself in a seething mass of players, rubbers, and coaches, while a babel of voices, greetings, commands, laughter, and lament, confused him. It was a busy scene. The trainer and his assistants were working like mad. The doctor and the head coach were talking twenty to the second. Everybody was explaining everything, and the indefatigable coaches were hurrying from man to man, instructing, reminding, and scolding.

Joel had only to look on, save when he lent a hand at removing some torn and stubborn jersey, or at finding lost shin-guards and nose masks, and so he found a seat out of the way, and, searching the room with his gaze, at length found Prince. That gentleman was having a nice, new pink elastic bandage put about his ankle. He was grinning sturdily, but at every clutch of the web his lips twitched and his brow puckered. Joel watching him wondered how much more he would stand, and whether his (Joel's) chance would come ere the fatal whistle piped the end of the match.

"Time's up!" cried the head coach suddenly, and the confusion redoubled until he mounted to a bench and clapped his hands loudly above the din. Comparative silence ensued. "Fellows," he began, "here's the list for the next half. Answer to your names, please. And go over to the door. Fellows, you'll have to make less noise. Dutton, Selkirk, Murdoch—Murdoch?"

"Right!" The voice emerged from the folds of a woolen sweater which had stubbornly refused to go on or off. With a smile the head coach continued the list, each man responding as his name was announced and crowding to the doorway.

"Chesney, Rutland, Burbridge, Barton——"

A murmur arose from the listening throng, and Chase, a tall, pale-faced youth, his cheek exhibiting the marks of a contact with some one's shoe cleats, groaned loudly and flung himself on to a bench, where he sat looking blindly before him until the list was finished.

"Story, Prince——"

"Here!" called the latter, jumping from his seat. Then a sharp, agonized cry followed, and Prince toppled over, clutching vainly at the air. The head coach paused. The doctor and the trainer pushed toward the fallen man, and a moment later the former announced quietly:

"He's fainted, sir."

"Can he go on?" asked the head coach.

"He is out of the question. Ankle's too painful. I couldn't allow it."

"Very well," answered the other as he amended the list. "Kingdon, Blair, March."

Joel's heart leaped as he heard his name pronounced, and he tried to answer.

"March?" demanded the head coach impatiently; and

"Here, sir!" gulped Joel, rushing to the door.

"All right," continued the head coach. "There isn't time for any fine phrases, fellows, and if there was I couldn't say them so that they'd do any good. You know what you've got to do. Go ahead and do it. You have the chance of wiping out a good many defeats, more than it's pleasant to think about. The college expects a great deal from you. Don't disappoint it. Play hard and play together. Don't give an inch; die first. Tackle low, run high, *and keep your eyes on the ball!* And now, fellows, *three times three for Harwell!*"

And what a cheer that was! The little building shook, the men stood on their toes; the head coach cheered himself off the bench; and Joel yelled so desperately that his breath gave out at the last "Rah!" and didn't come back until the little door was burst open and he found himself leaping the fence into the gridiron.

And what a burst of sound greeted their reappearance! The west stand shook from end to end. Crimson banners

broke out on the breeze, every one was on his feet, hats waved, umbrellas clashed, canes swirled. A youth in a plaid ulster went purple in the face at the small end of a five-foot horn; and for all the sound it seemed to make it might as well have been a penny whistle. The ushers waved their arms, but to no purpose, since the seats heeded them not at all, but shouted as their hearts dictated and as their throats and lungs allowed.

Joel, gazing about him from the field, felt a shiver of emotion pass through him. They were cheering *him!* He was one of the little band in honor of which the flags waved, the voices shouted, and the songs were sung! He felt a lump growing in his throat, and to keep down the tears that for some reason were creeping into his eyes, he let drive at a ball that came bumping toward him and kicked it so hard that Selkirk had to chase it half down the field.

"Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Harwell! Harwell! Harwell! Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Harwell!"

The leaders of the cheering had again gotten control of their sections, and the long, deliberate cheer, majestic in its intensity of sound, crashed across the space, rebounded from the opposite stand, and went echoing upward into the clear afternoon air.

"Harwell!" muttered Joel. "*You bet!*" Then he gathered with the others about Dutton to listen to the leader's last instructions. And at the same moment the

east stand broke into cheers as the gallant sons of Yates bounded on to the grass. Back and forth rolled the mighty torrents of sound, meeting in midair, breaking and crashing back in fainter reverberations. They were singing the college songs now, and the merits and virtues of both colleges were being chanted defiantly to the tunes of popular airs. Thousands of feet "tramp-tramped," keeping time against the stands. The Yates band and the Harwell band were striving, from opposite ends of the field, to drown each other's strains. And the blue and crimson fluttered and waved, the sun sank lower toward the western horizon, and the shadows crept along the ground.

"There will be just one more score," predicted the knowing ones as they buttoned their ulsters and overcoats up at the throat and crouched along the side lines, like so many toads. "But who will make it I'm blessed if I know!"

Then Harwell lined up along the fifty-five-yard line, with the ball in their possession, and the south goal behind them. And Yates scattered down the field in front. And the linesmen placed their canes in the turf, the referee and the umpire walked into the field, and the stands grew silent save for the shrill voice of a little freshman on the west stand who had fallen two bars behind in "This is Harwell's Day," and needs must finish out while his breath lasted.

"Are you all ready?" asked the referee. There was no reply. Only here and there a foot moved uneasily as weights were thrown forward, and there was a general, almost imperceptible, tightening of nerves and muscles.

And then the whistle blew.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HARWELL *vs.* YATES—A FAULT AND A REQUITAL.

THE kick-off came into Blair's ready arms, the interference formed quickly, and the full-back sped down the field. One white line passed under foot—another; Joel felt Blair's hand laid lightly upon his shoulder, and ran as though life itself depended upon getting that precious ball past the third mark. But the Yates ends were upon them. Joel gave the shoulder to one, but the second dived through Kingdon, and the runner came to earth on the twenty-three-yard line, with Joel tugging at him in the hope of advancing the pigskin another foot.

"Line up quickly, fellows!" called Story. The players jumped to their places. "*1—9—9!*" Joel crept back a bare yard. "*1—9—9!*"

Kingdon leaped forward, snugged the ball under his arm, and followed by Joel tried to find a hole inside left end. But the hole was not there, and the ball was instantly in the center of a pushing, grinding mass. "Down!" No gain.

Story, worming his way through the jumble, clapped his hands. Chesney was already stooping over the ball. Joel

ran to his position, and the quarter threw a rapid glance behind him.

"*2—8—9!*" He placed his hand on the center's broad back.

"*2—8—!*" The ball was snapped. Joel darted toward the center, took the leather at a hand pass, crushed it against the pit of his stomach, and followed the left end through a breach in the living wall. Strong hands pushed him on. Then he came bang! against a huge shoulder, was seized by the Yates right half, and thrown. He hugged the ball as the players crashed down upon him.

"Third down," called the referee. "Three yards to gain."

"Line up, fellows, line up!" called the impatient Story, and Joel jumped to his feet, upsetting the last man in the pile-up, and scurried back.

"*2—9—9!*"

"*2—9—!*" Back sped Blair. Up ran Joel and Kingdon. The line blocked desperately. A streak of brown flew by, and a moment later Joel heard the thud as the full-back's shoe struck the ball. Then down the field he sped, through the great gap made by the Yates forwards. The Harwell ends were well under the kick and stood waiting grimly beside the Yates full-back as the ball settled to earth. As it thudded against his canvas jacket and as he started to run three pairs of arms closed about him, and he went down in his tracks. The ball lay on Yates's fifty-three-yard line.

The field streamed up. The big Yates center took the ball. Joel crept up behind the line, his hands on the broad canvas-covered forms in front, dodging back and forth behind Murdoch and Selkirk. "*26—57—38—19*—!" The opposing left half started across, took the ball, and then—why, then Joel was at the very bottom of some seven hundred pounds of writhing humanity, trying his best to get his breath, and wondering where the ball was!

"Second down. Three and a half yards to gain."

Again the lines faced. Joel was crouched close to quarter, obeying that player's gesture. They were going to try Murdoch again. Joel heard the breathless tones of the Yates quarter as he stooped behind the opposing line.

"A tandem on guard," whispered Joel to himself. The next moment there was a crash, the man in front of him gave; then Joel and Story, gripping the turf with their toes, braced hard; there was a moment of heaving, panting suspense; then a smothered voice cried "Down!"

"Third down," cried the referee. "Three and a half yards to gain."

"Look out for a fake kick," muttered Story, as Joel fell back. The opposing line was quickly formed, and again the signal was given. The rush line heaved, Joel sprang into the air, settling with a crash against the shoulders of Chesney and Murdoch, who went forward, carrying the defense before them. But the ball was passed, and even as the Yates line broke the thud of leather against leather was heard.

Joel scrambled to his feet, assisted by Chesney, and streaked up the field. The ball was overhead, describing a high, short arch. Blair was awaiting it, and Kingdon was behind and to the right of him. Down it came, out shot Blair's hands, and catching it like a baseball he was off at a jump, Kingdon beside him. Joel swung about, gave a shoulder to an oncoming blue-clad rusher, ran slowly until the two backs were hard behind him, and then dashed on.

Surely there was no way through that crowded field. Yet even as he studied his path a pair of blue stockings went into the air, and a threatening obstacle was out of the way, bowled over by a Harwell forward. The ends were now scouting ahead of the runners, engaging the enemy. The fifty-five-yard line was traversed at an angle near the east side of the field, and Joel saw the touch line growing instantly more imminent. But a waiting Yates man, crouchingly running up the line, was successfully passed, and the trio bore farther infield, putting ten more precious yards behind them.

The west stand was wild with exultant excitement, and Joel found himself speeding onward in time with the rhythmic sway of the deep "Rah-rah-rah!" that boomed across from the farther side. But the enemy was fast closing in about them. The Yates right half was plunging down from the long side, a pertinacious forward was almost at their heels. And now the Yates full was charg-

ing obliquely at them with his eyes staring, his jaw set, and determination in every feature and line. The hand on Joel's shoulder dropped, Blair eased his pace by ever so little, and Joel shot forward in the track of the full, his head down, and the next moment was sprawling on the turf with the enemy above him. But he saw and heard Blair and Kingdon hurdling over, felt a sharp pain that was instantly forgotten, and knew that the ball was safely by.

But the run was over at the next line. Kingdon made a heroic effort to down the half, and would have succeeded had it not been for the persevering forward, who reached him with his long arms and pulled him to earth. And Blair, the ball safe beneath him, lay at the Yates thirty-five yards, the half-back holding his head to earth.

Joel arose, and as he trotted to his position he looked curiously at the first finger of his left hand. It bore the imprint of a shoe-cleat, and pained dully. He tried to stretch it, but could not. Then he shook his hand. The finger wobbled crazily. Joel grinned.

"Bust!" he whispered laconically.

His first impulse was to ask for time to have it bound. Then he recollected that some one had said the doctor was very strict about injuries. Perhaps the latter would consider the break sufficient cause for Joel's leaving the field. That wouldn't do; better to play with a broken arm than not to play at all. So he tried to stick the offending hand in his pocket, found there was no pocket there, and put the finger in

his mouth instead. Then he forgot all about it, for Harwell was hammering the blue's line desperately and Joel had all he could do to remember the signals and play his position.

For the next quarter of an hour the ball hovered about Yates's danger territory. Twice, by the hardest kind of line bucking, it was placed within the ten-yard line, and twice, by the grimmest, most desperate resistance, it was lost on downs and sent hurtling back to near mid-field. But Yates was on the defensive, even when the oval was in her possession, and Harwell experienced the pleasurable—and, in truth, unaccustomed—exultation that comes with the assurance of superiority. Harwell's greatest ground-gaining plays now were the two sequences from ordinary formation and full-back forward. These were used over and over, ever securing territory, and ever puzzling the opponents.

Joel was hard worked. He was used not only to wriggle around the line inside of ends and to squirm through difficult outlets, but to charge the line as well, a feat of which his height and strong legs rendered him well capable. He proved a consistant ground-gainer, and with Blair, who worked like a hero, and Kingdon, who won laurels for himself that remained fresh many years, gained the distance time and again. But although the spectacular performances belonged here to the backs, the line it was that made such work possible. Chesney, with his six feet four and a half inches of muscle, and his two hundred and twenty-nine pounds of weight, stood like a veritable Gibraltar of strength. Beside

him Rutland was scarcely less invulnerable, and Murdoch, on the other side, played like a veteran, which he was not, being only a nineteen-year-old sophomore, with but one hundred and sixty-seven pounds to keep him from blowing away.

Selkirk gave way to Lee when the half was two thirds over, but Burbridge played it out, and then owned up to a broken shoulder bone, and was severely lectured by the trainer, the head coach, and the doctor in turn; and worshiped by the whole college. Captain Dutton played a dashing, brilliant game at left end, and secured for himself a re-election that held no dissenting vote. And Barton, at the other end of the red line, tried his best to fill the place of the deposed Chase, and if he did not fully succeed, at least failed not from want of trying. But it was little Story, the quarter-back, who won unfading glory. A mass of nerves, from his head down, his brain was as clear and cool as the farthest goal post, and he ran the team in a manner that made the coaches, hopping and scrambling along on the side lines, hug themselves and each other in glee. So much for the Harwell men.

As for Yates, what words are eloquent enough to do justice to the heroic, determined defense she made there under the shadow of her own goal, when defeat seemed every moment waiting to overwhelm her? Every man in that blue-clad line and back of it was a hero, the kind that history loves to tell of. The right guard, Morris, was a pitiable sight as, with white, drawn face, he stood up

under the terrific assault, staggering, with half-closed eyes, to hold the line. Joel was heartily glad when, presently, he fell up against the big Yates center after a fierce attack at his position, and was supported, half fainting, from the field. The substitute was a lighter man, as the next try at his position showed, and the gains through the guard-tackle hole still went on. Yates's team now held four substitutes, although with the exception of Douglas, the substitute right-guard, none of them was perceptibly inferior to the men whose places they took.

The cheering from the Harwell seats was now continuous, and the refrain of "Glory, glory for the Crimson!" was repeated over and over. On the east stand the Yates supporters were neither hopeless nor silent. Their cheers were given with a will and encouraged their gallant warriors to renewed and ever more desperate defense. The score-board proclaimed the game almost done. With six minutes left it only remained, as it seemed, for Yates to hold the plunging crimson once more at the last ditch to keep the game a tie, and so win what would, under the circumstances, have been as good as a victory.

Down came the Harwell line once more to the twenty yards, but here they stopped. For on a pass from quarter to left half, the latter, one Joel March of our acquaintance, fumbled the ball, dived quickly after it, and landed on the Yates left guard, who had plunged through and now lay with the pigskin safe beneath him!

It is difficult to either describe or appreciate the full depth of Joel's agony as he picked himself up and limped back to his place. It was a heart-tearing, blinding sensation that left him weak and limp. But there was nothing for it save to go on and try to retrieve his fatal error. The white face of Story turned toward him, and Joel read in the brief glance no anger, only an almost tearful grief. He swung upon his heel with a muttered word that sounded ill from his lips. But he was only a boy and the provocation was great; let us not remember it against him.

The Yates center threw back the ball for a kick, and Joel went down the field after it. As he ran he wondered if Story would try him again. It seemed doubtful, but if he did—Joel ground his teeth—he would take it through the line! They would see! Just give him one chance to retrieve that fumble! A year later and he had learned that a misplay, even though it lose the game for your side, may in time be lived down. But now that knowledge was not his, and a heart-rending picture of disgrace before the whole college presented itself to him.

Then Blair had the ball, was off, was tackled near the side line under the Yates stand, and the two teams were quickly lined up again. The cheers from the friends of the blue were so loud that the quarter's voice giving the signal was scarcely to be heard. Joel crept nearer. Then his heart leaped up into his throat and stood still.

"*7—1—2!*"

There was no mistake! It was left half's ball on a double pass for a run around right end! The line-up was within eight yards of the east side line. The play was the third of the second sequence, in which Joel with the other backs had been well instructed, and its chance of success lay in the fact that it had the appearance of a full-back punt or a run around the long side of the field. Joel leaned forward, facing the left end. Blair crept a few feet in.

"*7—1—!*" began the quarter.

The ball was snapped, Blair ran three strides nearer, the quarter turned, and the pigskin flew back. Joel started like a shot, seized the ball from the full-back's outstretched hands, and sped toward the right end of the line. The right half crossed in front of him, the right end and tackle thrust back their opponents, the left tackle and guard blocked hard and long. Blair helped the right half in his diversion at the left end, and Joel, with Dutton interfering and Blair a stride behind, swept around the end.

The only danger was in being forced over the touch line, but the play worked well, and the opposing tackle seemed anchored. The Yates end, from his place back of the line, leaped at them, but was upset by Dutton, and the two went down together. The opposing left half bore down upon Joel and Blair, the latter speeding along at the runner's side, and came at them with outstretched arms. Another moment and Joel was alone. Story and the half were just a mass of waving legs and arms many yards behind.

Joy was the supreme sensation in Joel's breast. Only the Yates full-back threatened, the ball was safely clutched in his right arm, his breath came easily, his legs were strong, and the goal-posts loomed far down the field and beckoned him on. This, he thought exultingly, was the best moment that life could give him.

Behind, although he could not hear it for the din of shouting from the Harwell stand, he knew the pursuit to be in full cry. He edged farther out from the dangerous touch line and sped on. The Yates full-back had been deceived by the play and had gone far up the field for a kick, and now down he came, and Joel found a chill creeping over him as he remembered the player's wide reputation. He was the finest full-back, so report had it, of the year. And of a sudden Joel found his breath growing labored, and his long legs began to ache and seemed stiffening at the thighs and knees. But he only ran the faster and prepared for the threatened tackle. Harwell hearts sank, for the crimson-clad runner appeared to waver, to be slowing down. Suddenly, when only his own length separated him from his prey, the Yates full-back left the ground and, like a swimmer diving into the sea, dove for the hesitating runner.

There was but one thing that day more beautiful to see than that fearless attempt to tackle; and that one thing was the leap high into the air that the Harwell left half made just in the nick of time, clearing the tackler, barely avoiding a fall, and again running free with the ball still safe!

The Yates player quickly recovered and took up the chase, and the momentary pause had served to bring the foremost of the other pursuers almost to Joel's heels. And now began a contest that will ever live in the memories of those who witnessed it.

Panting, weary, his legs aching at every bound, his throat parching with the hot breath, Joel struggled on. Joy had given place to fear and desperation. Time and again he choked down the over-ready sobs. Behind him sounded the thud of relentless feet. He dared not look back lest he stumble. Every second he expected to feel the clutch of the enemy. Every second he thought that *now* he must give up. But recollection of that fumble crushed down each time the inclination to yield, and one after another the nearly obliterated lines passed under foot. He gave up trying to breathe; it was too hard. His head was swimming and his lungs seemed bursting.

Then his wandering faculties rushed back at a bound as he felt a touch, just the lightest fingering, on his shoulder, and gathering all his remaining strength he increased his pace for a few steps, and the hand was gone. And the ten-yard line passed, slowly, reluctantly.

"One more," he thought, "one more!"

The great stands were hoarse with shouting; for here ended the game. The figures on the score-board had changed since the last play, and now relentlessly proclaimed one minute left!

Nearer and nearer crept the five-yard line, nearer and nearer crept the pursuing full-back. Then, and at the same instant, the scattered breadth of lime was gone, and a hand clutched at the canvas jacket of the Harwell runner. Once more Joel called upon his strength and tried to draw away, but it was no use. And with the goal line but four yards distant, stout arms were clasped tightly about his waist.

One—two—three strides he made. The goal line writhed before his dizzy sight. Relentlessly the clutching grasp fastened tighter and tighter about him like steel bands, and settled lower and lower until his legs were clasped and he could move no farther! Despairingly he thrust the ball out at arms' length and tried to throw himself forward; the trampled turf rose to meet him. . . .

. . . . . .

"The ball is over!" pronounced the referee. It was a nice decision, for an inch would have made a world of difference; but it has never been disputed.

Then Dutton leaped into the air, waving his arms, Rutland turned a somersault, and the west stand arose as one man and went mad with delight. Hats and cushions soared into air, the great structure shook and trembled from end to end, and the last few golden rays of the setting sun glorified the waving, fluttering bank of triumphant crimson!

CHAPTER XXV.

THE RETURN.

"Boom! Boom!" thundered the big drum.

"Tootle-toot!" shrilled the fife.

"Tarum! Taroom!" growled the horns.

The Harwell band marched through the archway and defiled on to the platform. The college marched after. Well, perhaps not all the college; I have heard that a senior living in Lanter was too ill to be present. But the incoming platform was thronged from wall to track, so it was perhaps as well that he didn't come, because there positively wasn't room for him.

"What is it?" asked a citizen in a silk hat of a gayly decorated youth on the outskirts of the crowd. The latter stared for full a minute ere the words came. Then he cried:

"Here's a fellow who wants to know what we're here for!" And a great groan of derision went up to the arching roof, and the ignorant person slunk away, yet not before his silk hat had been pushed gently but firmly far down over his eyes. Punishment ever awaits the ignorant who will not learn.

"Glory, glory for the Crimson,
Glory, glory for the Crimson,
Glory, glory for the Crimson,
For this is Harwell's day,"

sang the throng.

"Boom! Boom! Boom!" thundered the big drum.

"Tootle-toot!" shrilled the fife.

"Now, fellows, three times three, three long Harwells, and three times three!" shouted the master of ceremonies hoarsely.

"Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Harwell! Harwell! Harwell! Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Harwell!" shrieked the crowd.

"Louder! Louder!" commanded the remorseless youth on the baggage truck. "Nine long Harwells! One, two, three!"

"Har-well! Har-well! Har-well! Har-well! Har-well! Har-well! Har-well! Har-well! Har-well!" The sound crashed up against the vaulted station roof and thundered back. And none heard the shriek of the incoming train as it clattered over the switches at the entrance of the shed, and none saw it until it was creeping in, the engineer leaning far out of the cab window and waving a red bandanna handkerchief, a courtesy that won him a cheer all to himself.

Then out tumbled the returning heroes, bags in hands, followed by the head coach and all the rest of the attendant train. And then what a pushing and shouting and struggling there was! There were forty men to every player, and the

result was that some of the latter were nearly torn limb from limb ere they were safe out of reach on the shoulders of lucky contestants for the honor of carrying them the first stage of the journey to college.

There were some who tried to hide, some who tried to run, others who enjoyed the whole thing hugely and thumped the heads of their bearers heartily just to show good feeling.

Joel was one of the last to leave the car, and as he set foot on the platform a hundred voices went up in cheers, and a hundred students struggled for possession of him. But one there was who from his place of vantage halfway up the steps repelled all oncomers, and assisted by a second youth of large proportions seized upon Joel and setting him upon their shoulders bore him off in triumph.

"Boom! Boom!" said the big drum. And the procession started. Down the long platform it went, past the waiting room doors where a crowd of onlookers waved hats and handkerchiefs, and so out into the city street. Joel turned his head away from the observers, ashamed and happy. There was no let-up to the cheering. One after another the names of the players and substitutes, coaches and trainer, were cheered and cheered again.

"Out of the way there!" cried Joel's bearers, and the marching throng looked about, moved apart, and as Joel was borne through, cheered him to the echo, reaching eager hands toward him, crying words of commendation and praise into his buzzing ears.

"Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, Rah-rah-rah, March!"

"One!" shrieked a youth near where Joel soon found himself at the head of the procession, and the slogan was taken up:

"Two! Three! Four! Five! Six! Seven! Eight! Nine! Ten! E-lev-en!"

"Now give me your hand, Joel!" cried the youth upon whose left shoulder he was swaying. Joel obeyed, smiling affectionately down into the upraised face. Then he uttered a cry of pain. One of the fingers of his left hand was bandaged, and Outfield West dropped it gingerly.

"Not—not *broke?*" he asked wonderingly. Joel nodded.

"Aren't you *proud* of it?" whispered his chum.

"Yes," answered Joel simply and earnestly.

"May I take it, too?" asked the other youth. Joel started and looked down into the anxious and entreating face of Bartlett Cloud. He grasped the hesitating hand that was held up.

"Yes," he answered smilingly.

And the big drum boomed, and the shrill fifes tootled, and the crimson banners waved upon the breeze, and every one cheered himself hoarse, and thus the conquering heroes came back to the college that loved them.

And Joel, a little tearful when no one was looking, and very happy always, was borne on the shoulders of West and Cloud, friend and enemy, at the very head of the procession, honored above all!

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